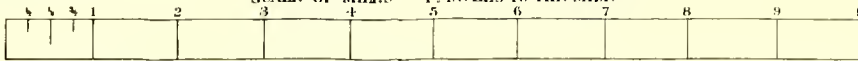




Hope is Remembering with Praise

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church
Conover, North Carolina
100 Years

SCALE OF MILES 1 1/2 INCHES TO THE MILE



EXPLANATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS.

Public Roads ———— Indicate distances in miles, between forks and crossings of Roads

Rail Roads ————

Churches +

Residences, Mills & +

School houses +

E.L. Evangelical Lutheran

G.R. German Reformed

M.E. Methodist Episcopal

A.M.E. African Methodist Episcopal

Bp Baptist

E. Episcopal

Pres. Presbyterian

Un-Union

Latitude and Longitude as
given by Prof W.C. Coker in his
Map of North Carolina in
"Encyclopaedia Britannica"

NOTES AND STATISTICS.

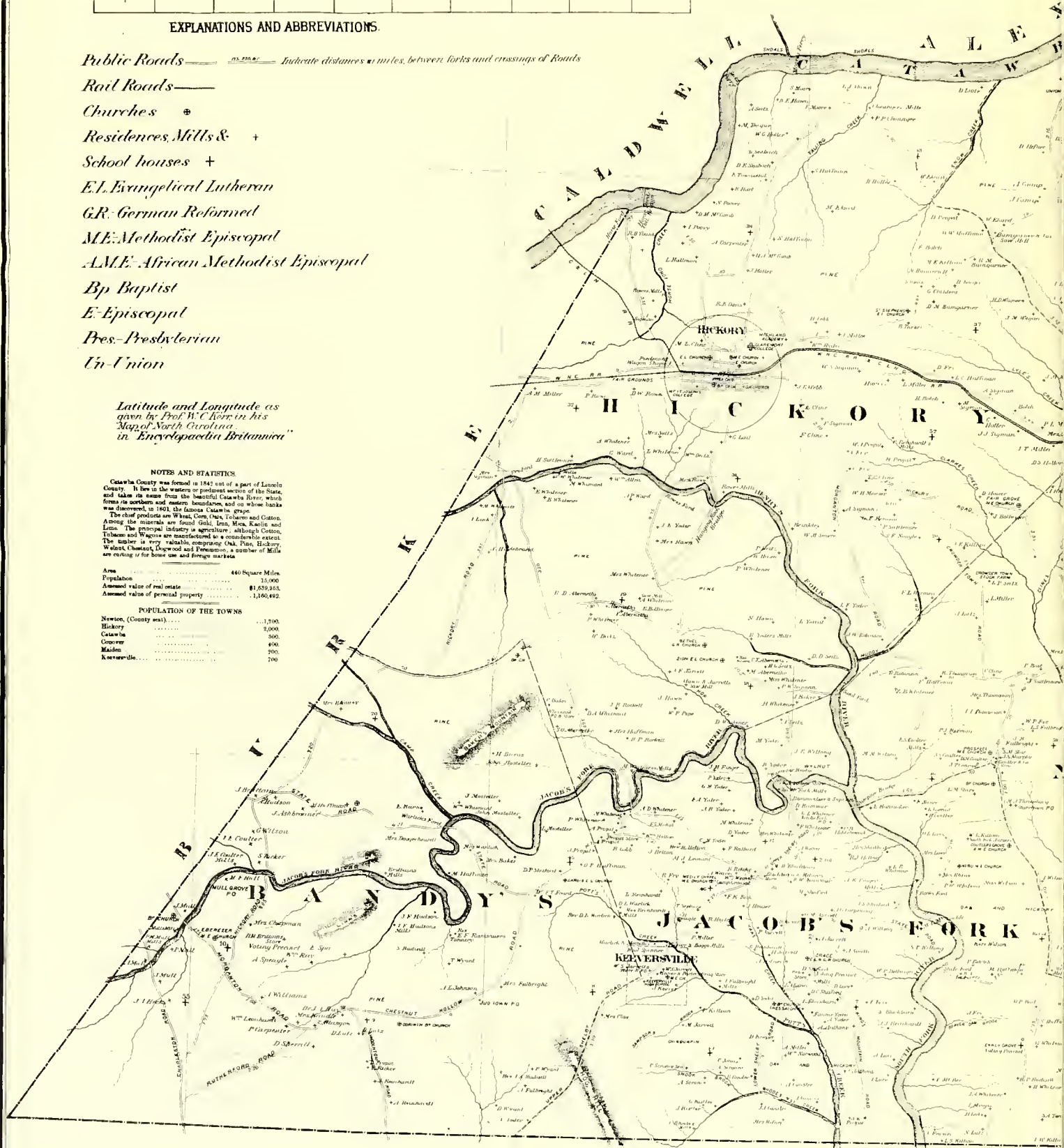
Catawba County was formed in 1842 out of a part of Lincoln County. It lies in the western or piedmont section of the State, and takes its name from the beautiful Catawba River, which forms its northern and eastern boundaries, and on whose banks was discovered, in 1801, the famous Catawba grape.

The chief products are Wheat, Corn, Oats, Tobacco and Cotton. Among the minerals are found Gold, Iron, Mica, Kaolin and Limestone. The principal industry is agriculture, although Cotton, Lumber and Wagon are manufactured to a considerable extent. Tobacco and Wagon are manufactured to a considerable extent. The number is very valuable, comprising Oak, Pine, Hickory, Walnut, Chestnut, Laurel and Persimmon; a number of Mills are cutting it for house use and foreign markets.

Area	440 Square Miles.
Population	15,000
Assessed value of real estate	\$1,539,363.
Assessed value of personal property	1,160,492

POPULATION OF THE TOWNS

Newton, (County seat),	1,700.
Hickory	2,000.
Catawba	800.
Crocker	400.
Maiden	700.
Kearneysville	700.



MAP OF CATAWBA COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA.

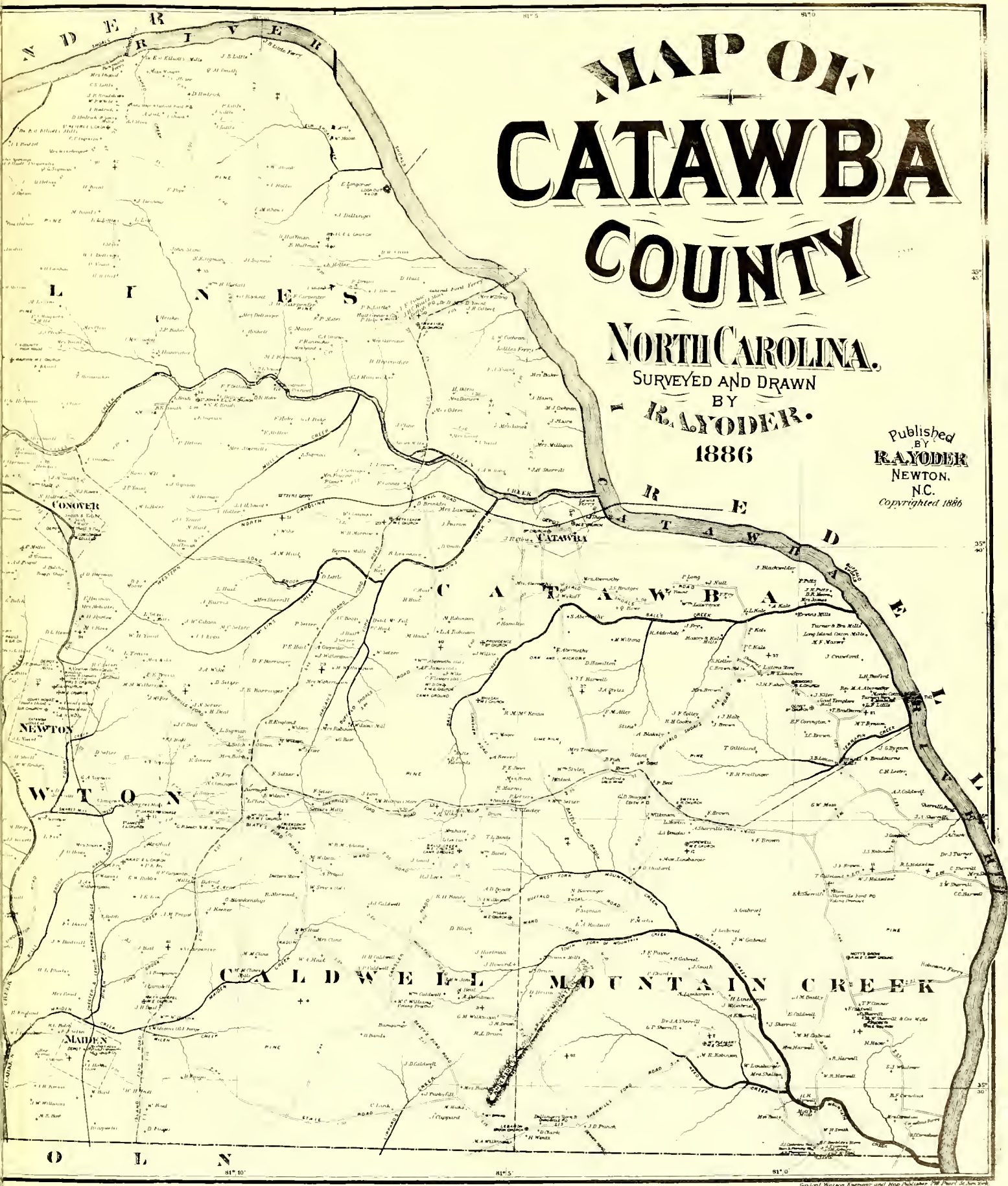
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R. AYODER.

1886

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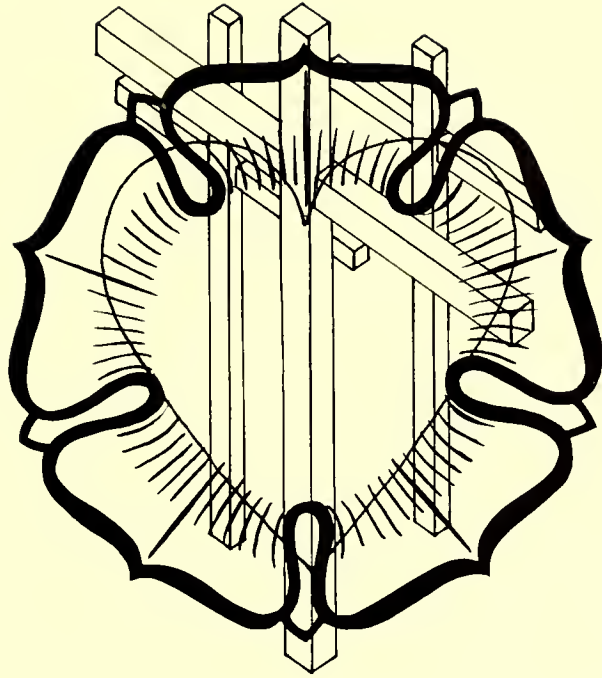
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Hope is Remembering with Praise

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church
Conover, North Carolina
100 Years



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CONCORDIA

“Hope Is Remembering With Praise”

The Reverend Howard J. Patten

AUTHOR

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Foreword

Why write a history? What might be the value, the purpose, of such an enterprise?

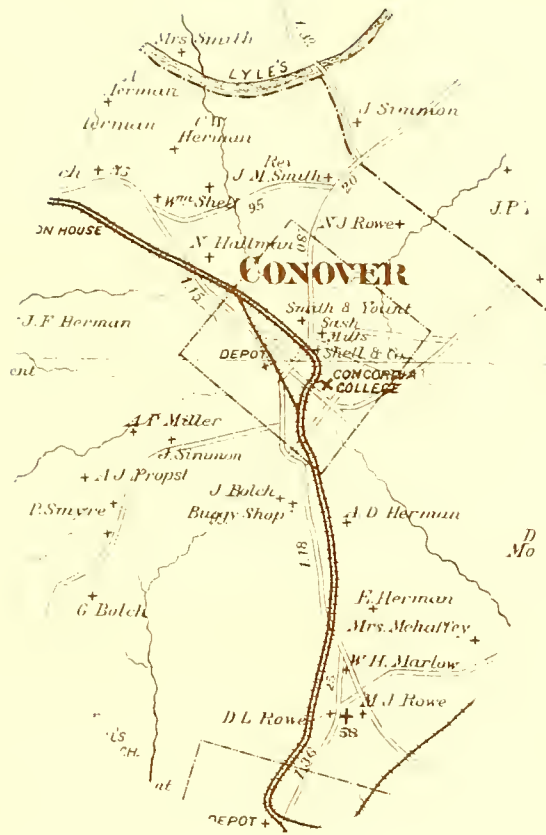
There is value in remembering our roots. Increased understanding and deeper appreciation may be cultivated by a thoughtful review of the experiences and achievements of our parents in the faith. They have left us a precious legacy. By this history we honor our spiritual ancestors, we gratefully acknowledge the rich heritage they have given us, and we seek to enable a deeper understanding of the meaning and value which that heritage has for us.

Even more, hope is stirred within us by this remembering. Recollections and reflections which span a century serve as a unique vantage point from which we may discern how God's love and care are expressed and His promises fulfilled in what happens to those who put their trust in Him. God's grace and blessing are abundantly evident throughout the history of Concordia. By this written record we call to remembrance the evidences of how God has been at work in His people and we renew our hope. We affirm our confidence that He will be as gracious to us in the future as He has been in our past.

Finally, this remembering culminates in praise. By this history we offer to God and declare to the world about us our thanksgiving for all that God has done in and through us. We share this with the prayer that all who read it might be led to join with us in offering praise to God both now and forevermore in eternity.

Pastor Stephen G. Mazak, Ph.D.

Chapter I



"I am going to Conover day after tomorrow—
to teach in that little burg."



"I am going to Conover day after tomorrow — to teach in that little burg."

Robert Anderson Yoder, an 1877 spring graduate of North Carolina College in Mount Pleasant, is writing to his brother to inform him that he has secured a position with an infant Lutheran high school in the only recently incorporated community of Conover (January 26, 1877). Young Yoder's words may not be copy for a Chamber of Commerce release, but they are an accurate description of Conover in July of 1877. The area was beginning to experience the first stirrings of new life after the War Between The States. The scars from that war were perhaps not immediately apparent but they were carried both physically and emotionally by the earliest residents. Catawba County had sent 1500 men into the service of the Confederacy; 300 of them to die. Stoneman and other marauders had pillaged Newton and many could remember hiding livestock and valuables from Union soldiers.

One vivid memory provides this description... "In 1865 a part of Johnson's army of invasion set up a camp about a quarter of a mile from our home (near St. Johns Church). Two generals walked into the house at noon and ordered grandmother to prepare a meal. She did her best although the soldiers had left little with which to feed them or any one else. They went to the granary and hauled the corn away. They took the chickens out of the yard. In order to save the meat, a box was put into a hole dug into the hillside and covered with dirt and leaves. The horses were put into the care of a faithful Negro slave in the deep pine forest."

It was a moment for the reassertion of frontier determination — for rugged individualists to begin life again with hard work, primitive tools and the possibility of God's Grace. The Rev C. O. Smith in his brief autobiography offers a dramatic word picture of the meanness of life which followed the war and surrounded the beginnings of Conover.

In this old house—the Mathias Barringer home—Catawba County was organized in 1842. Barringer was killed by Indians. The home was dismantled and restored in Newton where it served as a library and museum. In 1950 it was destroyed by fire.



"There are no electric lights — but rather smoking tallow candles; no refrigerators — a milk box down by the spring; no washing machines — mothers scrubbed the clothes on a board after boiling them in a washing pot in the backyard; no canned goods in the stores — peaches and apples are cut and dried in the sun; there is little sugar and coffee — the few pounds of coffee the people did get are used so sparingly that it scarcely colors the hot water, and molasses is used instead of sugar; no automobiles, street cars or even buggies — travel is by foot, or horseback, in a wagon or a clumsy kind of thing called a carriage; no paved roads — only mud lanes called roads; no clothing stores or dress shops — wool is sheared from sheep and spun into thread on the spinning wheel and woven into "linsey" for dresses and into "jeans" for the men; no shoe stores — cowhides are taken to the neighboring tanyard and leather formed into heavy clumsy shoes which must last for a year; shoe polish is soot from the chimney; no dye to color the "linsey" dresses and "jeans" suits — the handmade clothes are colored with the bark and roots of trees and plants. Social activities consist of "corn shuckings", "cotton pickings", "log rollings", "houseraisings", community singings, picnics, camp meetings and church activities. . . There are no newspapers, no libraries, few books for the school. . . School buildings are made of logs, heated by fireplaces with wood cut by the pupils themselves. . . The children came on foot through cold, snow, rain and mud to teachers who do the job for the smallest salary for three or sometimes four months a year."

Within this humble context Conover was born as a trade center with the opening in 1871 of an eating place and boarding house for railroad men by Francis and Ellen Miller Smyre. The Smyres had purchased a small

tract of land from a Confederate veteran, John Pinkney Spencer and his wife, Diana Herman. This Hotel-Tavern residence was located on the "Y", a junction point from which the Southern Railroad ran a branch line or track three miles south to Newton. "The Junction" served as a turning point for trains traveling either north or south. The little town was well situated and had genuine prospect for growth even though in 1877 there were only about a dozen homes within the present boundary lines. A small house was built by the town for a depot. This building had to be erected by local residents as the railroad did not find the point significant enough to build a company depot, in spite of the fact that more corn was being shipped from the "Y" than from any other place in the county.



A typical southern homestead

The origin of the name, Conover, is the subject of differing histories. One source suggests that a Mrs. Wheisiger of Morganton, "a lady of good presence and ideals", should be given credit for changing the name of the "Y" or "The Junction" to the name Conover, "after the name of a family residing somewhere in the North." Another tradition holds that the name derives from a noted sculptor, Canova. This name given by Mrs. John, Julia Rowe, Seitz and Mrs. A. D., Mattie Miller, Hollar was consistently mispronounced by railroad crews who called out the name "Conova" and stretched it into "C-O-N-O-V-E-R".

The community is briefly described in 1911 by George W. Hawn in his "Catawba Soldier of the Civil War", as "a quiet village — a Catawba hamlet, inhabited by a very quiet people." The description includes an insightful note on the jail... "constructed of wood — with a lock pitifully rusty and a threshold happily unworn."

This same source provides, however, a deeper insight into the early citizens of Conover, for the editor observes that "from the beginning, Conover appears to have been alert to the needs for education and educational facilities." It is this concern for education shared by the early residents that very quickly gave rise to Concordia College and subsequently to Concordia Church. The interrelationship of community, college and congregation are so intimate that it is virtually impossible to tell the story of one without touching historically all three.

The exact occasion for the creation of a high school and college must have derived from several concerns. However a debate on the presence of Christ in the Sacrament between a Lutheran and a Methodist minister evidently gave a deep emotional impetus to the beginnings of a Lutheran educational institution. German Lutheran and German Reformed Christians had happily shared church or "meeting house" facilities for decades in the area. St. John's, St. Paul's and St. James were all "Union" churches — jointly owned and maintained, with worship services scheduled either at different times on the same day or on alternate Sundays. Many Lutherans of the area were happy to use Catawba College, a Reformed school in Newton, for their children's secondary education. However, the debates between a Conover pastor, the Rev. J. M. Smith and the Rev. Daniel May, a Methodist minister from the Newton area, on August 7 and 8 of 1874, dramatically demonstrated to the Lutherans in the audience a significant doctrinal difference between the two Communions on the Article of the Lord's Supper.

The debates were begun in front of the Reformed Church (known in the area as the White Church) but the crowd became so large that the debaters were forced to move to the grove on the courthouse square.



Based on the topic, "Is Christ's Body Present in the Lord's Supper?", the Conover minister took the Lutheran stand that "our Lord's Body is in the Sacrament"; May took the Reformed stand that it was not, "because you couldn't taste it, see it or smell it." Suddenly, a Lutheran identity and a desire for Lutheran education surfaced.

The realization of this need evidently prompted Lutherans of the area to turn to a noted Lutheran leader who had attempted to establish a school in the area, even before the War Between The States, the Rev. Polycarp Cyprian Henkel. Pastor Henkel, then serving Carolina Lutherans who had migrated to Missouri, returned briefly to Catawba County and joined in the debates which continued intermittently for at least two years. Rev. Henkel was the great-grandson of Anthony Jacob Henkel, Court Chaplain to Duke Maurice of Saxony and exiled to the colonies in 1717 because of the Duke's conversion to Roman Catholicism. Polycarp's grandfather, Paul Henkel, was responsible with other members of his family for printing a number of Lutheran books of doctrine, among them the first *English* edition of the Book of Concord ever published in 1851. In their hour of need, the "Call to the Henkels" by area Lutherans was most natural. He was obviously impressed with the dedication to a school and with the real prospects for the establishment of such an institution because plans for a return were made. In returning to the Conover area Pastor Henkel was making good on a promise that such a return would take place only for the establishment of a college. He preached his last sermon to the congregation in Missouri and took up residence on his farm north of Conover in April of 1877.

Catawba County was a natural location for a college. The County was a central location for the 70 congregations and 10,000 Lutherans of the Tennessee Synod in North Carolina. The *Tennessee* Synod was a rather interesting name for a unit which had almost all its membership in North Carolina. It was formed in Tennessee by confessionally oriented Lutherans uncomfortable with the doctrinal laxity of the North Carolina Synod.

In order for an institution of higher learning to be formed, a great deal of ground work and preparation had to be done. The support of the parent body, The Tennessee Synod, had to be secured, a site determined and money for building and faculty gathered.

In the Synod Session at Salem Lutheran Church in Lincoln County, North Carolina it was resolved, "That Synod devise some plan for the establishment of a Learning Institution which would not be in conflict with our present Constitution." The Tennessee Synod agreed to the need and gave its moral support, but neither appropriated funds nor suggested a site. This lack of any affirmative action may have been due in part to the strong competition between the communities of Conover and Hickory and Newton; each pledging funds, offering possible locations and stirring up community support.



Old St. Paul's Church

This is old St. Paul's, built by the Palatine people from Germany. The walls are 2 feet thick; windows are small and there is a steep gallery. An unusual feature is the sounding board, hanging over the pulpit to aid acoustics. Soldiers of six wars are buried in the church graveyard, and the early gravestones are graven in German. In the old days, a crier called people to worship in broken English: "Heah all. Heah all. Da Breacher iss now retty; all de Beeples weel pleece to come into da haus of worsheep."

Col. Walter W. Lenoir, a philanthropic Episcopalian and a Confederate officer in the War Between the States, offered property in Hickory to any Protestant church which would establish a college. This offer as well as other alternatives were discussed by Lutheran leaders. In 1877 a decision was made; the school would be established in Conover. Conover was chosen because it had raised more money than the other two towns, property was offered by The J. Pinkney Spencers and some suggest because it was close to the homes of Pastors Henkel and Smith, the latter having two sons of school age. The people of Conover showed their appreciation for the decision by subscribing an additional \$2,000 for the school buildings. The direction of the school, its substance, its site and its purpose had taken over three years and at least three major votes to bring to a conclusion.



Mr. and Mrs. Pinkney Spencer
Early founders who contributed church land.

The Concordia High School Association was officially formed on August 18, 1877 at St. John's Lutheran Church. According to the records, the following were present at the meeting: Revs. P. C. Henkel, H. Goodman, M. L. Little and J. M. Smith. Laymen present were D. W. Moose, A. M. Huit, D. D. Seitz, Andrew Hollar and others unnamed. At this meeting Rev. Henkel was elected President of the Board of Trustees of the school, Rev. J. M. Smith, Secretary of the Board and R. A. Yoder as teacher.

Although a decision was made it was obviously not to the satisfaction of all. There yet remained some unfinished business, which would deeply trouble the school, the community and congregation in little more than a decade.

The name *Concordia* (Latin for unity, literally "hearts together") was chosen for the new school. Pastor Henkel had brought the name back with him from Missouri. It was a favorite among a group of confessionally oriented, doctrinally strict, Saxon immigrants who called their church body, The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States. Pastor Henkel admired these people and their leader the Rev. C. F. W. Walther greatly. He had together with Pastor Walther founded an English speaking branch of the young Synod, called the English Synod, at a meeting in Gravelton, Missouri in August of 1872. This association like the "unfinished business" of the school's location was to play an important roll in the future of "Concordia".



*The Hollar Homeplace on the
"Rock Barn Road"*

Chapter II



"Rosa furnished the music...never heard the like in all their lives."

When one considers the enormous amount of energy that was expended in the preparation for the school, its opening was something less than auspicious. The enthusiasm, excitement and moral support of the communities, the rather significant pledges of money and land, the time and devotion contributed by Pastor Smith and other area clergy, the return of Pastor Henkel from Missouri making good on his promise and the years of preparatory education by Mr. Yoder, all added up to nineteen pupils studying in a private home in March of 1878.

Mr. Yoder was alternating his teaching time between public and private schools. But there seems to be little question in his mind that the secondary school would soon come into existence, for in a letter dated October 20, 1877, the young teacher writes "school closed this week, suppose I will teach the winter school. . . I am studying theology under Rev. P. C. Henkel. We are going to have a building put up soon in Conover, for the school so long talked about. It will be called the Concordia High School for males and females. There will be connected with it a Theology Department, it is expected of me to take charge of the Literary or Academic Department."

Mr. Yoder must have drunk deeply not only of Pastor Henkel's and Pastor Smith's abilities in theology, but also of their enthusiasm for the new school. His energy and efforts in and out of the classroom are written in large letters and would be a strong influence in the early days of the college's existence. The young teacher was himself undoubtedly well prepared for the difficulties of these early years by the many obstacles he had overcome in reaching this point in his career. He came from a Lincoln County family with little means to provide what was even then an expensive secondary education. He was forced to terminate his college education several times to find employment with which to subsidize his education and traveled as far as Illinois for both employment and schooling. In spite of the difficulties he encountered, young Yoder excelled in school and was evidently a natural leader among his fellow students. Although he was contracted as a teacher by the school association, it is apparent that this was but a means toward his ultimate goal, becoming a pastor of the Lutheran Church. It was understood from the beginning that his position at Concordia would include as thorough a theological education as Pastor Henkel and other area ministers could provide.

The course of study and other details of the school's first months are provided in a circular written by Mr. Yoder for distribution in the immediate area. The first session which began in March of 1878 was for a fourteen-week duration. The course of study was am-

bitious enough, for a list of textbooks includes: Bingham's Latin, Bullious' and Kendrick's Greek, Otto's German, Davies' and Robinson's Mathematics, Steel's "Fourteen Weeks in the Sciences", Hart's Rhetoric and Bullious' English Grammar. When one considers that



Professor R. A. Yoder

Mr. Yoder was the only teacher, the range of his abilities or at the very least his interest and enthusiasm, were significant. We have an interesting note too on the tuition and board for the fourteen weeks.

Latin, Greek, German, Higher Math	\$10.50
Algebra, Rhetoric and Philosophy	7.00
Higher Arithmetic, English Grammar	5.25
Reading, Writing, Common Arithmetic	3.50
(10% deduction if paid in advance)	

Board can be had at \$8-\$10 per month — ample accommodations for students to board themselves.

This circular was printed by Henkel and Company of New Market, Virginia, the family business of the Rev. Polycarp Henkel.

It seems obvious that at least in the first months of the school's existence the students ranged if not in age then certainly in ability from the primary grades through the upper grades levels. A somewhat humorous note which does something by way of illustrating that education was not entirely without its detractors comes from a note written by a parent to an area teacher in 1800 in reply to a request that the parent furnish a geography book, "Hit (the pupil) ain't going ter be no geographer, ner cross no sea, nor be no Philedephy lawyer."

Mr. Yoder seems to parallel the school both in its somewhat sporadic school terms, as well as in the gradual establishment of roots for, again in a letter, January 26, 1878, he writes "I am engaged in teaching the public school now... will close in two weeks... then I will start another school as you will learn from the enclosed circular... I have bought some property in this place... one-half interest in a house and lot — paid \$400... a splendid location, the trains stop right in front, the land joins the railroad land, contains about one acre... a good building, ten rooms, good well and well-house, stable, fruit trees... I think I made a good trade. I have rented the half interest at \$5 per month which is fifteen per cent on the investment... I have rented to the man who owns the other half; he is a fine man, Mr. N. Townsend... I am now boarding at Rev. P. C. Henkel's in this place and studying theology."

It must have been in early spring of 1878 that the foundations for the Administration and Educational Building were laid, for the building was ready for the fall term of the year. Mr. Yoder's thoughts however are at this point on subjects more earthy and more sublime as he writes in March of that year "My free school closed here tenth of February... Brother Dave bought a two-year-old steer for eighty cents at a sale in Statesville. My school is small now, have just taught one week, have employed Miss Sallie Herman as an assistant... I intend to add a Music Department in about two months... I have several students who will take lesson on instruments... I am to be married May 9th. Her name is Rosa E. Fisher, daughter of Capt. J. P. Fisher. She lives near Salisbury. She taught music at the seminary in Mount Pleasant; which explains how we met."

The summer of 1878 must have been for the community, college, Mr. Yoder and others immediately involved with the school, filled with a flurry of activity. The school was completed, the students assembled and the faculty increased by one. The increase in faculty was due it seems more to Mr. Yoder's personal good fortune than to any planning by the Board of Trustees, for the new faculty was none other than the new Mrs. R. A. Yoder, Rosa. Mr. Yoder writes toward the end of June that year, "I am married... She is a graduate of St. Mary's, Raleigh... She will teach music... I'm still studying under Rev. P. C. Henkel... Our new school building is nearly ready to be occupied — not painted yet — we have a building of which I am proud, it's very creditable to the town, the church and to the community — I flatter myself it is, in part at least, the result of my last year's labors.

I closed my last term three weeks ago — gave an entertainment consisting of declamations, dialogues, music, etc. We had an organ on the stage and Rosa furnished the music, it almost carried off the people of Catawba, for they 'never heard the like in all their lives'... This country is waking up a little on education, and in music especially, there are several new organs around."

The new building — J. P. Cline and Alfred Huffman, contractors — was constructed at the cost of \$4,000. This amount was made up of cash gifts and donations in kind such as lumber, shingles, labor and other building materials. The handsome two-story building was of frame construction in the shape of a square cross. The building was finished with an attic and a cupola from which founders boasted one could get a clearer view of the North Carolina mountains to the west than from any other point in Catawba County. On the first floor was an assembly hall, a library and a classroom. Four classrooms, a storeroom and a hallway were housed on the second floor with a total square footage of 4,050 feet. Seven acres of the highest land in Conover was donated by the J. P. Spencers to the "Concordia College Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Church" and the building itself was situated on a four-acre tract in the center of the land gift. With a building, land, faculty, Board of Trustees and nine months of successful operation, the new school could advertise throughout the south not only its existence but its attractive opportunities.

The circular at the beginning of the school year 1879 can boast an enrollment, with each name listed, of thirty-seven males and twenty-four females. Although the school was most successful in its first year, it is helpful to remember that Mr. Yoder and his wife were the faculty for the first four years of the school's existence. It is also a tribute to the Yoders that in addition to the establishment of the school, serving as faculty and studying theology, Mr. Yoder was also serving as pastor to a group of Conoverites who had begun meeting regularly for worship in the new College Assembly Hall, September 8, 1878. This handful of people from in and around Conover, gathered around Word and Sacrament, were to become Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Concordia College, September 16, 1878

Chapter III



“Had a congregational meeting in the chapel—not many present—”



"The Ole Well House"

"The only constant in life is change." We who live in the period of accelerated change have a way of assuming that these words apply most appropriately and sometimes only to our own generation. However, a quick survey of the history of those pioneers who settled Catawba County would soon bring us to the conclusion that we do not have any corner on the change market. From Germany — through the East Coast immigration points — down the Shenandoah Valley — into the valley of Catawba, represents change of a dramatic proportion. The change of language, custom and culture can scarcely be overstated. Even the change of family names, and with those names generations of identity, constitute a major break with the past and a giant step into the future. In a British colony, a German identity would become a liability rather than an asset, so the Schmidts become Smiths, the Brauns become Browns, the Hochs become Hokes and Zimmermans and Kleins are translated into Carpenters and Littles.

And yet, another challenge to change and adaptation had to be faced by the German settlers; for this farming people, who created the new frontier of pastoral landscape with their fields and livestock, would affect and be

affected by industrialization. This generation's farmer would become the next generation's furniture and textile manufacturer.

The German Lutheran churches were in 1870, almost exclusively, small, rural, family parishes with one pastor serving as many as eight or nine congregations; such were Saint Peter's, Saint John's and Bethel. But growth of the small community, communities like Hickory, Newton or Conover, would create within it the need for the small community parish.

The emergence of Conover as a corporate entity created a need and with it the challenge to a new congregational style. One more challenge to change! Lutherans in Conover were first served by the Rev. J. M. Smith who had regular entries recording services he conducted during the years 1876 and 1877. Together with the Rev. P. C. Henkel, Smith conducted services in a Conover school building for at least two years prior to the creation of the college or any formal congregational organization. This organization undoubtedly took place under Pastor Smith sometime in the year 1878. For in September of that year the congregation was recognized in the convention of the Tennessee Synod and Mr. R. A.

Yoder was authorized to be ordained and to be the pastor of Concordia and Saint James Lutheran Congregations.

Mr. Yoder's diary reports that he attended services conducted by Pastor Smith in a schoolhouse on the Sunday following his journey to Conover, July 14, 1877. Under the tutelage of Pastors Henkel and Smith, he began to conduct Sunday School in Conover, August 5, 1877, and apparently continued the leadership of the Sunday School until he formally became pastor of the congregation. Mr. Yoder was asked to preach at a meeting held on April 14, 1878, but he declined, perhaps feeling that he was not yet prepared for his first sermon. He did preach to the congregation shortly thereafter, however, for on the date September 8, 1878, he notes that he preached to "a large audience in the Concordia School auditorium." His diary also notes that on October 13, 1878, "the elders of *my* congregation agreed to have Wednesday services". Mr. Yoder's congregation was not however "his" nor was he yet "Pastor Yoder". He was not yet ordained and it seems that either Smith or Henkel conducted the Communion liturgies. An example of this necessary division of authority is recorded in a December 7, 1878, diary entrance, "then I and Rosa (Mrs. Yoder) went to the chapel to hear J. M. Smith preach from the eighth chapter of Jeremiah, the last verse 'Is there no balm in Gilead?' This was the beginning of a Communion meeting (took place on Saturday), *the first ever held by the Conover congregation.*"

A most interesting note both for Conover and Concordia is also found in his diary under the dateline, December 24, 1878, "this morning Rev. J. M. Smith and Rev. P. C. Henkel and the ladies, and Rosa and myself, trimmed the Christmas tree — very cold — some snow and ice on the ground still — *tonight we had the first Christmas tree ever had in Conover* — Rev. J. M. Smith and P. C. Henkel each made an address — I called off the presents — Rosa got a dress and scissors — I received a pair of pants and necktie."

Mr. Yoder must have continued as a "student-pastor" until his ordination in November of 1880 for again his diary provides us with the following information on the progress of the school and his desire for ordination; "I am still in Conover and doing, as I think, very well. I have a permanent position in our school; in fact, I am its head — Rev. P. C. Henkel is its president nominally — He is present sometimes and gives religious instruction but has no money position in it. . . . Our school is in a very flourishing condition. . . . Last term I had sixty-five students, we opened again last Monday with fifteen, expect about fifty this term. . . . I WAS ORDAINED ON THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF NOVEMBER LAST IN OUR SCHOOL CHAPEL AT A MEETING OF OUR CONFERENCE."

A somewhat humorous entry, at least from the viewpoint of a pastor, is included with a Saturday, January 24, 1880, remembrance; the new pastor writes "Had a congregational meeting in the chapel — Not many pres-

ent — Read the Constitution, etc. After the sermon, I baptized Mr. Hollar's child — Corda Alda Hollar — my first Baptism." Then, as now, the low points in a pastor's life were meetings — poorly attended — and the high point the proclamation of God's Grace in Word and Sacrament. A sister of Pastor Yoder, who was in attendance, provides us a memory from that first Baptism; she was not sure, she remembered, who was "scared the most, Rev. Yoder or the baby."



Corda Alda Hollar

Corda Alda Hollar, the first person baptized at Concordia, was born December 11, 1879, one of six children born to Daniel Sylvanus Hollar and Melinda Herman Hollar baptized by the Rev. R. A. Yoder, January 24, 1880. Miss Hollar was confirmed by Rev. J. L. Cromer at Saint Andrews Lutheran Church, Hickory, North Carolina. She married George Andrew Sigmon, December 10, 1899. Mrs. Sigmon died October 31, 1967.

The record of congregational officers again comes from Pastor Yoder's diary, February 8, 1880. "After preaching we had a congregational meeting. Capt. P. F. Smith and J. P. Spencer were elected Deacons (Elders), and Elkana Ekard and T. J. Bost, Trustees." The identity of community and congregation can once again be observed in the fact that the new Deacons were also the mayor, Smith, and town constable, Spencer.

There are no known records available concerning the size of the congregation during its first years. It must have been however a substantial congregation almost from its inception for on May 9, 1880, "there were 105 persons in attendance at Communion" and again on May 1, 1881, "106 took Communion." We do know that a good number of members from Old Saint Paul's formed the nucleus of Concordia together with members from Saint John's which was experiencing a disagreement regarding the construction of a Union Church to be used jointly by the Reformed and Lutheran congregations.

The — now — Reverend Yoder continued to serve Concordia Congregation as pastor and Concordia College as head and teacher until August 26, 1883, when he reports preaching his last sermon to the Concordia Congregation. Pastor Yoder left the Conover area to study at the Lutheran Seminary in Pennsylvania for a year. This decision did not evidently meet with the approval of certain other pastors in the area for there seems to have been some exception taken to the necessity of additional theological study at this fancy, northern, school of theology. The reasons for Pastor Yoder's decision are not known. One can make an informed guess that his own desire for excellence as well as the necessity of credentials for the Concordia College faculty would, at least in part, lead the young man to the best theological training he could obtain. Although Pastor Yoder was to return as president of the college, he was never again to serve as pastor to the congregation he had been so instrumental in organizing.

It is a mistake to write the history of a congregation simply on the basis of who was serving the congregation as pastor at any one period in its history. Although the pastor is a spiritual leader, he is never either the only leader or the only person with God's spiritual gifts. For this reason as much history of the people of Concordia and of individual persons as is known and can be contained in a brief history is included. Given the above, it is at the same time necessary to open congregational history through the eyes and personalities of its pastors

over against God's own people with God's own Word of judgment and grace. For these reasons, the congregational history must include a listing of the pastors, as well as their observations and of the congregation's actions through them during each pastorate.

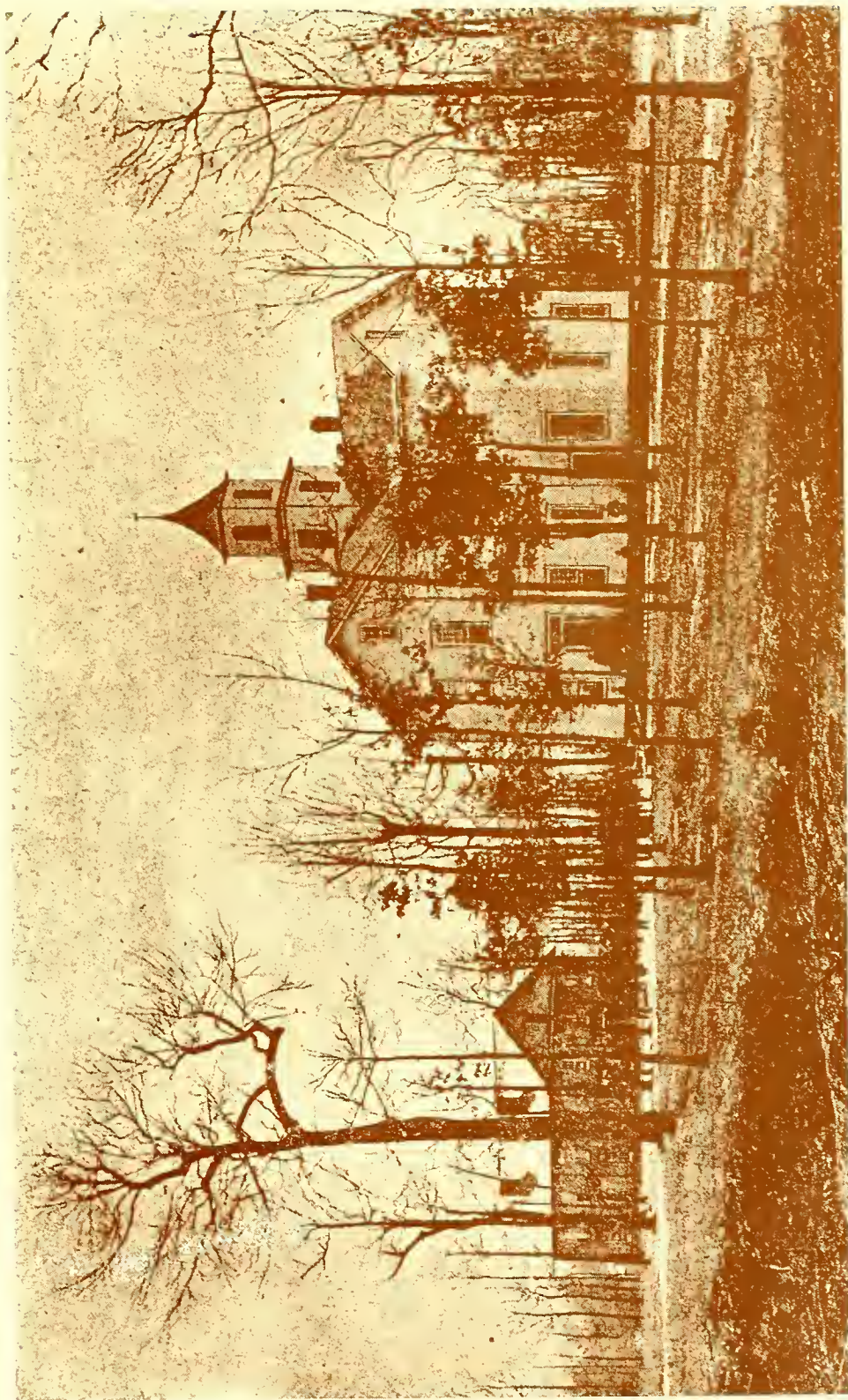
The Rev. J. C. Moser was the second pastor to officially serve Concordia Congregation. Little is known of his tenure in office other than The Tennessee Synod's Convention record of J. C. Moser as pastor of Concordia in 1884. Like Pastor Yoder, he served both as instructor at the college and pastor at Concordia. During his ministry, the parish was changed from Concordia — St. James to Concordia — St. John's. Details of parish life are virtually unknown during this period. Pastor Moser resigned his pastorate at Concordia in 1888 to accept a Call to the Holy Trinity — Zion Parish in Hickory. The congregation was then served either by interim pastors or in an apparently informal way by College Professors, J. S. Koerner and J. G. Schaid until 1891. Once again the reason for this tentative pastoral arrangement is unknown.

We do know that the period 1888-1892 was a particularly difficult moment for the congregation, the college and the community at large. As Mr. Harry Voigt writes in his master's thesis, *The History of Concordia College of Conover, North Carolina*, "ten miles to the west of Conover in the town of Hickory clouds were gathering which were brewing up a storm for Concordia."



The Rev. J. C. Moser

— The pastor is included in most major decisions; the pastor carries both the joys and the burdens of suffering for the greatest number of congregational members; the pastor is the one through whom the congregation most often acts and speaks; the pastor is the one who stands





The Gathering

This building stood about where Sigmon Hardware stands now (1980). Formerly the L.E. Hunsucker business. At the time of the photo, it was the Ed Herman, Sr. Building.

Chapter IV



“What future do we really have here?” ...

The ideal for Christ's Church is communities of immense understanding and intense insight, joined with hearts and minds devoid of self-interest and incapable of petty concerns. The distance between this ideal and the real is always great and is often measured in disappointment, anger, guilt, recrimination and cynicism. The history of God's people, from Sinai to Semtex, reveals the nagging truth of this reality. "We are sinners, that is true", sighs the poet... "We are saints that is truer" sings the Spirit. If the people who were emotionally, physically and spiritually Concordia had not yet learned to mourn their sinfulness and to celebrate their sainthood, they were on the verge of learning the lesson of their lives.

tor Crouse as he "wasted valuable time" riding in the cold, wet weather on the dirt road that connected the communities of Hickory and Conover... "What advantages there would be for all if the college could be relocated." In conversations with friends and fellow teachers among pastors of the area and people still grumbling over the Conover location, the subject must have surfaced time and again. "We are so restricted here"... "Four acres is simply not enough land." "Between the Administration Building and the boy's dormitory, there is no room for any other buildings"... "It would cost us a small fortune to buy additional land"... "Synod will never take us seriously at this location"... "What future do we really have here?"



The Boy's Dormitory

Schism, perhaps the ugliest word known to churchmen, never begins through the evil intentions of "bad" men. The tearing at Concordia began not by intention but as the by-product of a series of harmless, almost unrelated events among the Lutherans of "Catawba".

Professor A. L. Crouse, a faithful professor at Concordia College and pastor to two congregations with over 600 souls lived on the edge of the Hickory, North Carolina property offered by Col. Walter W. Lenoir "to any Protestant church which would establish a college". In all probability he had to cross this seventeen and a half acre campus of Highland College daily to make the ten-mile trek to teach theology to pre-seminary students at Concordia. One can imagine the silent thoughts of Pas-

These concerns whether expressed or only felt were valid. The four and one-half acre Conover site virtually prohibited future expansion without costly purchases of land adjoining the campus. At the same time Captain J. G. Hall, executor of the Lenoir Estate, was authorized upon the death of Col. Lenoir in July, 1890, to offer an additional thirty-six acres adjoining the Hickory property. This property, it was stipulated, could be sold and the proceeds used for the erection of a building for the principal of the school.

To make matters even worse for the Conover location in the early 80's, after a lively fight in the legislature, Newton succeeded in having the railroad moved so as to pass by that town. *The Catawba Soldier* remembers

... "This change necessitated moving of the tract from the east to the west side of Conover. The change appears not to have injured Conover in any way — only it cut off the fond hopes of a number of people who had longed to see Conover become the County Seat." This decision affected again the centrality of Conover in Catawba County.

There were at the same time many positive factors to consider. The State Legislature had chartered Concordia College in 1881. The boy's dormitory completed in 1881 was sparse but it was serviceable two stories, eight bedrooms and a first floor with eight separate study rooms. Enrollment of 120 students in 1888 was, in the words of President Yoder, "the greatest enrollment in the history of the institution". Synod was finally beginning to take the school seriously after its first years of almost orphaned existence. Although the college was not a school of the Tennessee Synod, it had been by 1890 advertised for five years on the back of the Annual Minutes of the Synod. And finally the Synod had even agreed to secure \$10,000 for the purpose of erecting new college buildings. By October of 1890 \$5,500 in subscriptions had been gathered of which \$2,635 was pledged in the Conover area.

The death in 1889 of Concordia's first guiding spirit, the Rev. P. C. Henkel, seems to have tipped the balance for the school's location in favor of Hickory. Although he was no longer president of the college, he yet remained on the Board of Trustees and his presence had to be a center of the young school's stability. *The Catawba Soldier* describes Dr. Henkel as "a man of extraordinary mental prowess... in debate and controversy, a formidable antagonist... He would never for any consideration go back on his word... He clinched every argument. In his manner, he was humble and unassuming. He was rigidly honest and truthful. His style of preaching was expository, plain and forceful... an uncompromising antagonist of error... boldly and fearlessly denouncing it wherever he met with it. In the Lutheran Church of the South, he was, perhaps the greatest man in its history.

At his death one can picture the beginning of a rather benign "power struggle" with the pivotal authority resting upon the strong shoulders of President Yoder or as his students called him, "The Bear". Although many entered the struggle, the storm's center swirled around Pastors Crouse and Moser, the latter a former pastor and professor at Concordia; Rev. W. P. Cline, President of the Tennessee Synod and Chairman of the committee to secure pledges of \$10,000 for Concordia; Rev. C. H. Bernheim, spokesman for the Conover concerns and finally President Yoder. It is impossible to provide information on all of the events in the ensuing three years. The following excerpts must provide the picture of life at Concordia from July, 1890 through September, 1892.



Rev. R. A. Yoder
"The Bear"

The first "shot" was fired by the death of Col. Lenoir and the reopening of the offer of the Highland College campus. We know that in October of 1890 Crouse, Moser and members of the Board of Trustees discussed Hall's proposal with Cline and Yoder until one o'clock in the morning, but decided not to bring it before Synod in its late December session. Yoder recounts his reasons for rejecting the relocation. "Considerable money gathered from members and congregations of our church had been spent at Conover. A canvass had been made for funds for a new building. The Synod had formally accepted the location at Conover and chiefly because of the agitation and bitterness that would surely follow..." Within two weeks, however, Yoder was again discussing this proposition with Crouse and Cline and word of this meeting must have circulated within the community for Pastor Bernheim and another member of the Board of Trustees visited Yoder in his home to confront him with the "Rebellion in College" on November 8th.

These moments must have been some of the most difficult that President Yoder, pastor, professor and citizen would ever experience. Only two years before he had built himself a fine home across from the campus. He has invested twelve years of his life in college, congregation and community. He has even pledged \$250 of his own money toward the \$10,000 guarantee on Concordia's future. Yet he is well aware of the serious limitations on the college in its present location. And now a thirteen-page letter from Cline, the Synod's president, forces the decision for relocation upon him. His loneliness must have become intense for even with his friends and former members he is deeply disappointed because of "the methods employed by leaders of the party favoring Conover to secure defeat of Hall's proposition."



L.R.: Jim Rice, Eugene Smith, John D. Yount, _____, John Eckard, Bob Brady, John A. Isenhower, _____, Sam Jordan, Ed Herman, _____, John L. Isenhower

Again, we are forced to imagine the conversations in the homes, streets, gathering places and after church meetings. Rumor and gossip, charge and countercharge, truth and half-truth mixed to create a Christmas, 1890 atmosphere very much at odds with the angel's promise, "Peace on Earth."

The day after Christmas, the called session met at St. James Lutheran Church outside of Newton. President Cline preached the opening sermon from the Isaiah text "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." Mr. Voigt notes on this text in his History of the College, "President Cline was convinced that the way to walk was to move to Hickory." Professor Crouse presented a carefully drawn resolution which, from his point of view, represented a compromise: "the Lenoir property was to be accepted as the site for the college and the Conover property was to be turned into THE P. C. HENKEL ORPHAN HOME AND ACADEMY..." as a living and useful memorial to the worth of him whose name it shall thus bear." This proposal must have been met by the Conover contingent with the same kind of enthusiasm with which the Confederate veterans among them would have entertained an invitation to Ulysses S. Grant's birthday party. One observer remembered, "Pastor Bernheim jumped up and with his face as red as a turkey's, shouted, 'If we can't have the tablecloth, we'll not take the dishrag'." Voigt quotes a lay delegate to that meeting, "I had the shock of my life when supposedly Christian ministers could hand it out to each other as they did at that meeting."

No official decision was reached. But on December 30, President R. A. Yoder tendered his resignation as President of Concordia and with that action relocation of the college seemed certain. By May 1st, the \$10,000 required to assume the Lenoir property had been raised and the property was accepted for the Tennessee Synod. When the announcement was made on May 1st, that Highland College would be opened in September, "the fires of passion created over the school question were fanned into a fiercer flame. The feeling in Conover became especially intense against those of the faculty and those of the students who would go to Hickory. On May 8th the feeling had reached such a pitch that some of the student body departed". President Yoder moved his new home on skids to Hickory. Many remember a statement widely attributed to him that if possible he would also have dug up and moved the well. Whether fact or legend the statement does give an indication of the anger, the disillusionment and pain which marked the separation of the faculty and the Tennessee Synod from Conover and Concordia.

The Board of Trustees of Concordia now found themselves with a college but no faculty, without Synodical support and only part of a student body. Two former graduates of Concordia, Mr. M. H. Yount and Mr. Charles L. Coon, the former to become mayor of Hickory and the latter superintendent of Wilson County Schools, were contracted to serve as the faculty for the 1891-1892 school year. It was recognized that this temporary circumstance could not sustain any venture as formidable as a college. The school's future would be determined by its association with something larger than itself and with access to faculty beyond the confines of Catawba County.

The spiritual tie created between the Tennessee Synod and the English Synod of Missouri by Pastor Henkel drew the young congregation and college into a renewal and deepening of this relationship which was to create a new identity. German-speaking Saxon immigrants and English-speaking Southern Lutherans were to become one in the Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church of Conover, North Carolina — The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.



A young graduate of Concordia College, The Rev. Jefferson P. Miller, Class of 1888-89.



The Student Body of 1890-Concordia College



The R. A. Yoder Family

Concordia College,
Conover, N. C.



Chapter V



"Charges of sheep stealing, proselytizing
and finally false doctrine, were raised..."

The bell that opened what was to become Lenoir Rhyme College in the Fall of '91 well might have tolled the death knell for Concordia College had it not been for the determination and resourcefulness of Conover's Lutherans.

At that moment the Board of Trustees was writing to the President of the English Missouri Synod, the Rev. F. Kuegele, requesting his office to secure a President for the College. This "turning to the Missouri" was, if not in desperation, then most predictable, for Henkel and the Tennessee Synod had long been friends with and admirers of these Missouri, German Lutherans. In a *History of the Tennessee Synod*, written by Socrates Henkel we are informed the Synod developed a fellowship with Missouri because of the latter's "promulgation and defense of the primitive doctrines and usages of the Lutheran Church." Pastor Kuegele in turn corresponded with the headquarters of the Tennessee Synod and although we do not know what response he received, we do know that in December he and the Rev. William Dallman journeyed to Conover to review the situation first hand. In conversations with the faculty of the new college in Hickory, they asked if there were valid reasons why Missouri should not supply the College. These conversations and their observations led them to enter into an agreement with the Board of Trustees which reads in part as follows: "We recommend: . . . that a professor be called . . . to be president . . . and pastor . . . to have full liberty in the pulpit and at the altar according to his conscience bound in God's Word . . . that young men be enabled to receive a classical education . . . with a view of graduating in theology at St. Louis, Missouri, or Springfield, Illinois."

This agreement was signed December 31, 1891, by Kuegele, Dallman and Bernheim, Secretary of the Board of Trustees. Although four of the Board of Trustees were not in the meeting and some suggest were not informed of the meeting, it seems a valid assumption that these four had virtually withdrawn any connections with the school. The staunch pastoral supporters of the school at this point were J. M. Smith and C. H. Bernheim.

The promise of leadership found its fulfillment in the person of the Rev. William Herman Theodore Dau, a pastor for six years in Memphis, Tennessee, and the Rev. George A. Romoser, a Spring graduate of the St. Louis Seminary. According to the brief Paul Bischoff history of Concordia in "Our Church Record, a publication of the Southeastern Conference of the Missouri Synod, October, 1908, Pastor Dau was specifically called by Concordia Congregation . . ." not by the Board of Trustees of the College and two Missourians as some wanted to make it appear at the time in order that they might



Left to right; standing: Prof. R. A. Romoser, Prof. L. Bucheimer (1st Pastor Emmanuel - 1894) Sitting L to R: Dr. W. H. T. Dau, (President of College), Prof. Charles L. Coon.

charge that Prof. Dau's Call was irregular, manipulated, etc. — but by the congregation in the regular and orderly way". Pastor Dau was installed as the "third" pastor in Concordia's history May 29, 1892. Professor Romoser was ordained and installed July 31, 1892.

In what had to be personally a most uncomfortable period, Pastor Dau began the school year and in early October submitted a report on the work of the college to the Tennessee Synod Convention in Hickory. This convention severed the functional ties between the College and the Synod with the words "Synod can now take no action in regard to the further fostering care of this institution." In March of 1892, the College Board of Trustees petitioned the English Missouri Synod to accept the college as its institution, to appoint members of the Board of Trustees and to supplement the salaries of the professors. The action of the English Synod that summer seems to have gone even one step further, for in addition to these responsibilities, a complete transfer took place and Concordia College became the property of the English Missouri Synod. This was a most remarkable understanding by the English Synod for at the time of this convention the Synod constituted only 28 congregations

scattered throughout the country with a total communicant membership of 2,084, served by 16 pastors. At the close of that convention the small church body found itself in possession of not only Concordia, but also another English language oriented school, St. John's in Winfield, Kansas.

The animosity created by the three-year controversy continued to trouble the Catawba County area for years to come. Both sides stated their case in print, Professor Yoder in his *Situation in North Carolina*, and a response later in 1894 in a pamphlet written by President Dau, *A Review of Professor R. A. Yoder's 'Situation in North Carolina'*.

The Catawba-News-Enterprise of Newton, established in 1879 — approximately the same time as the college — even reported on a debate staged between the Ohio and Missouri opponents... "The debate fell upon Professor Dau and nobly did he respond to the call. With burning zeal, thrilling eloquence and with convincing arguments he carried his audience on his lips as only a genius can".

The center of the Schism and its subsequent controversy had by now shifted from the college to the congregations of the area. Some congregations requested Missouri pastors, others Tennessee and more than one congregation had sympathies which divided them. The charge of "sheep stealing", "proselytizing" and finally "false doctrine" were raised. The last charge, by far the most serious of all, is surprising and seems unwarranted in the light of the two Synods' previous fellowship and histories of Lutheran Orthodoxy. The Tennessee Synod was, however, in a relationship with the United Lutheran Synod of the South whose doctrinal position was not as clear and uncompromising as Missouri felt it must be. For this cause, Concordia Congregation in April, 1893, presented a resolution to the Tennessee Synod in which the congregation, "begs to call attention to the un-Lutheran position of the Tennessee Synod in remaining in the United Synod of the South and asks the Tennessee Synod to withdraw from the said United Synod."

From the perspective of eighty-five years, it is difficult to determine whether the controversy actually uncovered a doctrinal inconsistency or whether the doctrinal disagreement surfaced to justify the separation. However, close analysis of the doctrinal question — a nuance on the doctrine of Election and Conversion — reveals a disagreement between Missouri and Tennessee so symantic and miniscule that separation over its interpretation remains at least an open question.

Again, The Catawba-News-Enterprise reports on this controversy... "to give even a synopsis of the discussion would be too tedious and would lay us open to the charge of dragging church matters into the secular papers. Suffice it to say that all parties were much instructed and some were edified but the greatest result of all was a manifest triumph of truth and we hope that all come to the proper understanding of this subject to the subversion of error. Conover was filled with visitors, conferees and students, during the three days of the debate. On the streets and in the houses nothing was heard but "Election, and the various incidents of the occasion."

What is beyond question is that both parties understood themselves as right and wronged. The representatives on both sides were highly respected and deeply revered by their supporters. In this whole period both the abundant Grace of God and the dramatic fallibility of man is utterly transparent. Nothing illustrates this better than a January 4, 1891 resolution of Concordia Congregation which rises to the defense of the former "Heavy", the Rev. L. A. Crouse. This man who had led the Hickory faction into the split was disciplined by the Tennessee Synod and was supported by the congregation in his transfer to "Missouri" for doctrinal reasons. Not only does Crouse, the former foe, receive a welcome and defense, but the same resolution that supports him also defends his old adversary Pastor Bernheim, the man with the face "red as a turkey", who would not have "the dish rag".

The birth of Missouri in North Carolina carried, like all births, both an experience in pain, and a promise of joy in the future.



Dr. C. F. W. Walther
First President Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod



The Student Body of 1895 Concordia College

3rd Row 1. Walter Wishart 2. Tice ? 3. Wade Hunsucker 4. Bolen 5. Miller Coyner 6. C. O. Smith 7. John Yount 8. Festus Sigmon 9. P. M. Dellinger 10. Jim Rice 11. Alvin Barger 12. Frank Smyre.

2nd Row 1. James Bolick 2. Richard Oehlschlager 3. E. T. Coyner 4. Lucy Coon 5. Betty Coon 6. Hattie Huitt 7. Lela Smith 8. Cora Yount 9. Martha Kuegle 10. Anna Isenhower 11. Cora B. Yount 12. Effie Huitt.

1st Row 1. Geo. Nolde 2. John Abel Isenhower 3. Frank Hemmeter 4. Chas. Ruppel 5. Worth Smyre.



College Campus in Conover about 1909

Chapter VI



“At last our own church building...”

Frantic! The period — 1888-1894 — was frantic for the fragile young College and it must have been equally so for its twin, Concordia Congregation. No less than five pastors served the congregation during this brief time span and there was intermittently at least forty-two months during this period when Concordia was to all intents and purposes "vacant". There was always a pastor for preaching on Sunday but the stability which "Our Pastor" symbolizes was more often absent than present.

The Catawba-News-Enterprise editorializes, "Times are quite dull here just now. The place did not even send one representative to the Inauguration but notice that it came off all right anyhow." March 6, 1893. If times were dull in the community they were on the edge of panic on campus and in the congregation. The instability of parish life without a pastor was alone enough to undermine the continuity of the congregation. The constant turmoil which must have marked every meeting and gathering and which we can be sure intruded even into the sermons could not have but added to the anxiety of the worshipers. We would search in vain for any reason for the congregation's continuing existence other than the Grace of the Holy Spirit, who gives unity — more often in spite of than because of his people. Yet this very "time of testing" itself must have created a determined and disciplined core of congregational leadership. Those who had faced the hardship of war and post-war "Reconstruction" were not the type to quit easily.

The first graduate of Concordia, the Rev. P. Wike, (Class of 1886) seems to personify the indomitable spirit of the College and Congregation. This man who served congregations ranging from The Virginia Shenandoah to Indiana, New York, New Jersey, and as far north as Galt, Canada, lived to be over ninety years old. This "will to live in loving service", the most profound of the Spirit's guidings, must have also shaped the congregation for its mission.

At the very height of the controversy, the "Young Ladies Aid" presented to the congregation a beautiful Communion set, placed into service "Easter, 1893". This act seems to both symbolize the confidence of the congregation in its continuing existence as well as the knowledge that the future of God's people always flows from Word and Sacraments.

Not only were the founders of the congregation also leading citizens in the community at the time of the congregation's beginning in 1878, but they continued in this two-fold ministry. The local newspaper announced on Friday, September 16, 1892, that "Messrs. Jerome Bolick and W. L. Fry, who have been appointed committee to open the new road from Newton to Conover, have decided on September 27th as the day they want all the help possible." The name of this man, Jerome Bolick, along with many other early members and citizens, was enshrined in the stained glass of the first sanctuary—windows which today grace the Chapel.



Although Pastor Dau was called to be pastor to the congregation, there seems to be no question that the intention was to ultimately place him into full-time service as President of the College. Within a year of his 1892 installation as pastor, he resigned, "to enable him to devote his time and strength to his other work." This vacancy was observed by the Enterprise that Fall. After noting that the courtyard had been "raked and thoroughly cleaned up for court," the reporter continues, "Concordia Lutheran Congregation at Conover has called as its pastor, Rev. Theo Engelder of Mt. Clemens, Michigan." (Engelder was later to become one of the most influential theologians in the history of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He declined the Call.)

There followed a period in which Concordia extended six Calls without success and in December, 1893, Professor Bucheimer of the College was asked to supply the congregation until the vacancy could be filled. The Catawba-News-Enterprise commented on these Calls extended: "Concordia Congregation called Rev. F. Kuegele of Koiner's Store, Virginia, to be its pastor two weeks ago. The news has just arrived that his present congregation refuses to dismiss him. He is greatly beloved by all, and the idea of separation is a sad one; however, we hope the Call will be resent and that the good people of Koiner's Store may change their minds on this point. Rev. Kuegele is a profound theologian and an acquisition to any community."

Three more Calls were sent out and declined. The congregation turned to Concordia Seminary at St. Louis and in response to its request for a graduate, the Rev. C. A. Weiss, was ordained and installed as the fourth pastor at Concordia, September 2, 1894. Although his actual term as pastor was brief, two years, the sense of purpose and direction which the pastor gave must have encouraged the congregation. Plans were drawn for a church building.



The Rev. C. A. Weiss

The congregation had been worshipping in the auditorium of the Administration Building for sixteen years. A Mr. Munsch was engaged as the architect and the proposed building given out for bids. Perhaps because of the cost, no bid was ever accepted, and the members determined to serve as their own "contractor". Whatever may have in the past few years preoccupied the members or threatened the fellowship with disharmony, now must have dissolved before the common goal of "at last our own church building". The members worked day and night and in whatever odd moments or periods they could assemble. The huge oak beams were placed into the foundation and are in the words of a present day contractor, "as solid today as when they were first laid." The bricks were handmade by the members, placed in the sun to dry and then fired in huge

kilns, which Mr. Claude Schell remembers were located along the railroad track near where the Conover plant of Southern Furniture is now located. He remembers, "the glow from the kilns could be seen at night by the local townspeople who would gather there at times in conversation about the new church building." The newspaper carries this dateline: "May, 1895 — The workmen engaged in making bricks for the proposed new church here are progressing as well as can be expected considering the rainy weather. About one-third of the required number (150,000) have kilned-ready for burning." A Summer 1895 item — "Conover has been stirring itself throughout this Summer. Although business in other towns has been at a standstill during the entire Summer, life has been lively here, occasioned by the renovation of the College building, work on the Concordia Church building, and a general renovation of a number of residences. College buildings present a nice and homelike appearance for the first time since their erection. The walls of the church edifice have been raised about half way up the frames. The design is a fine one and when completed will be a credit to this entire section of the state."



The Rev. W. H. T. Dau

First Pastor and First President
of Concordia with Missouri Synod.

A later news item observes "The new church is under roof and the spires are being finished. Its proportions are fine, making a better appearance than was expected." The architect's specifications were not followed in detail but the building does follow the plans in general.

CONSTITUTION

Of the *Ev. Luth. Concordia* Church,
in *Conover, Catawba Co., N.C.*

Preamble

We the undersigned members of the Ev. Luth. Church, sensible of spiritual needs and mindful of our Christian duties, in Jesus' name and with the hope of His blessing, adopt the subjoined Constitution, thereby to effect the organization of a church in which we hope God to be both our Saviour and our Lord and we His people, praying that He would graciously multiply and prosper us to the praise of His great name. Amen.

Chapter I.

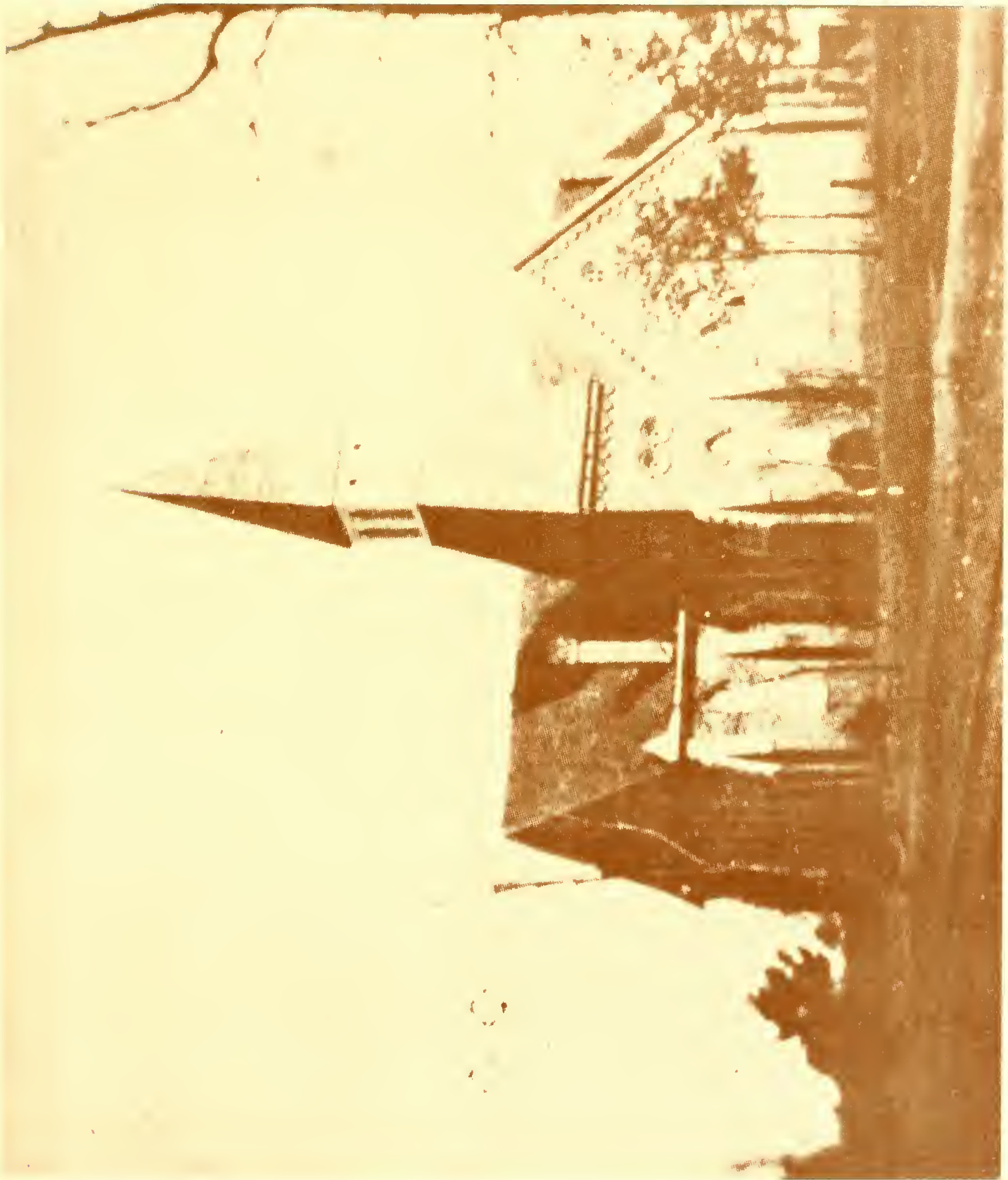
The Name.

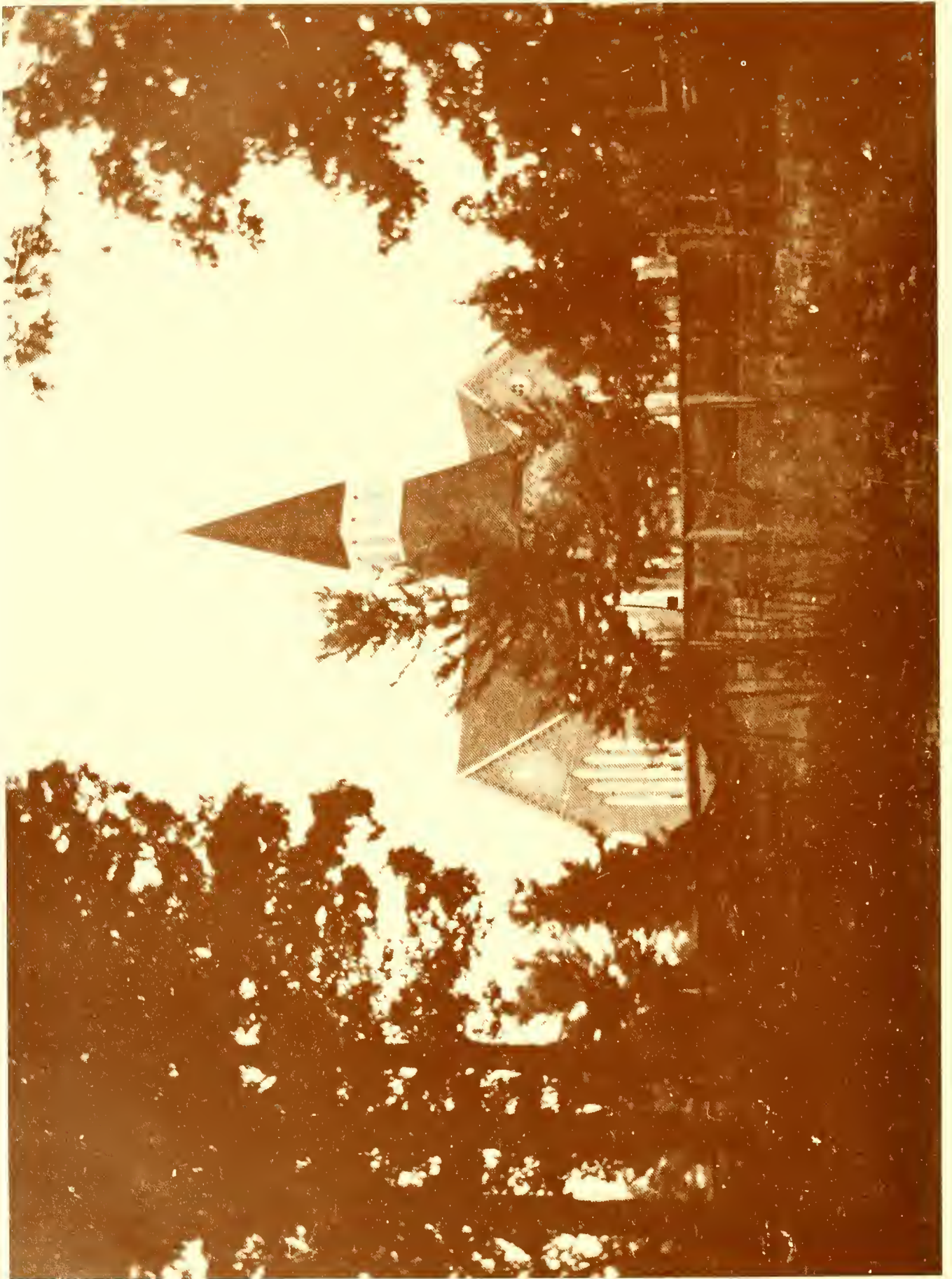
The name of this congregation shall be *Concordia Congregation.*

In the midst of this grand project, Pastor Weiss resigned as pastor to become a full-time professor at the College in 1896. President Dau once again became pastor of the Congregation and it is during his service that the new church was dedicated.

It is October 31, 1897, Reformation Day. Beneath the gentle flowing of flags and banners, Pastor Dau leads the clergy, George Romoser, George Luecke, C. A. Weiss and C. H. Burnheim. Pioneer Pastor J. M. Smith carries the Bible and the congregation follows in solemn procession out of the College Administration Building. With "hearts — once again — together" pounding with pride and joy and yet with measured steps Concordia marches to the new building and its dedication.

Although the congregation is small — about 140 communicant members as compared with over 900 adults today — the satisfaction and gratitude is immense, for the building is literally handmade — the labors of our own hands. This gratitude is not only great but it is well-taken; the building is beautiful — simple but honest and strong. The chancel is spare and plain, in style more Protestant than Lutheran. The lighting is by a great oil chandelier. The rear section of the building is separated from the sanctuary by a wall for use as the Christian Day School classroom. The building cost in actual cash is between \$5,000-\$6,000 but the donation of labor and equipment make it worth several times that amount.





A few of the oldest Lutherans in eastern Catawba County can recall the Dedication and the early years of "setting up housekeeping" in the new church home. Mr. Claude Schell has some vivid memories about the Church Bell, inscribed, "Presented by William Pinkney Smith, Oaksdale, Washington, March 1, 1897." "I remember very distinctly about the receiving of the bell for the church. Some of the Isenhower relation, Mr. Pink Smith, who used to live out in the St. Peter's community, moved away to the State of Washington. I remember a couple of us kids were at the old depot and saw the trainmen unload that bell. And it stood out on the platform for a couple of days before they decided how they would move it to the church, because it had some weight and they did not have the equipment to move things as we do in our day. That was a wonderful bell! In the Fall of the year on a clear frosty morning, one could hear the bell from miles around. It had a wonderful tone, a tone different from most all the other bells that you could hear from the various churches in our neighborhood." Mr. Clarence Smith remembers: "Mr. Pinkney Spencer, who donated the property for Concordia Church, rang the bell for as long as I can remember, and would hold his watch in his right hand when it came time to ring that

bell to be sure it was just right. Sometimes he would ask some of the youngsters to look if he was right so he could pull that bell on time."



Mr. Claude Schell



Mr. P. M. Dellinger with the children of Concordia's school in 1894.

McKinley is in the White House, German is still the official language of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Bolshevik Revolution is twenty years away, cotton is the king of the South, factory-made furniture is at most an experiment, but the promise which has sustained the tent-dweller, Abraham, and the Gospel which supplied the tent-maker, Paul, are now constants in the life of the people, Concordia. Lake Norman is timber and farm land and Conover is shaped by industry no more grand than a molasses mill or Jonas Hunsucker's Picker Stick and Hickory Handle factory. Yet this moment created by God's Promise is a down payment on the future of the congregation, the college and the community.

As Pastor R. F. Lineberger notes in his seventy-fifth history, "If one remembers the conditions of that day, especially the so-called 'Cleveland Financial Panic', then it becomes evident that great sacrifices were demanded of the members to complete this fine work of love. It is doubtful whether any group of members in the history of Concordia has ever sacrificed what these early fathers (and mothers) did, in order to support the work of the Lord in our midst."

To the members of a church, there are perhaps few scenes more beautiful and exciting than "my church at Christmas". Mr. Schell, Mrs. Susie Stearns, and others recall some of those first Christmases, especially the trees... "a real tree — cedar — and real lighted candles, and a real Christmasy smell." Our Christmas trees were the most beautiful we have ever seen — reached the ceiling. The candles were lighted each year by some of the taller members of the congregation. I particularly remember the Bolick boys. I believe I have never felt closer to Heaven than watching that Christmas tree being lighted and hearing those beautiful, beautiful hymns being sung."

Christmas weddings too, in the new building became the vogue, as the Enterprise notes, "There will be several weddings in Conover at Christmas. The writer is informed that one will be a church wedding, which is getting to be very fashionable here of late."

Concordia Congregation at long last had more than trees and bells and weddings. It had what these and countless other symbols and activities and experiences created; Concordia Congregation — a Pilgrim people — finally had a Home! This "Siamese twin" of the College had been gracefully separated and although the two would continue to grow in the community for decades to come, the Congregation finally had in its home an identity and a life of its own.





Original Conover Public School House



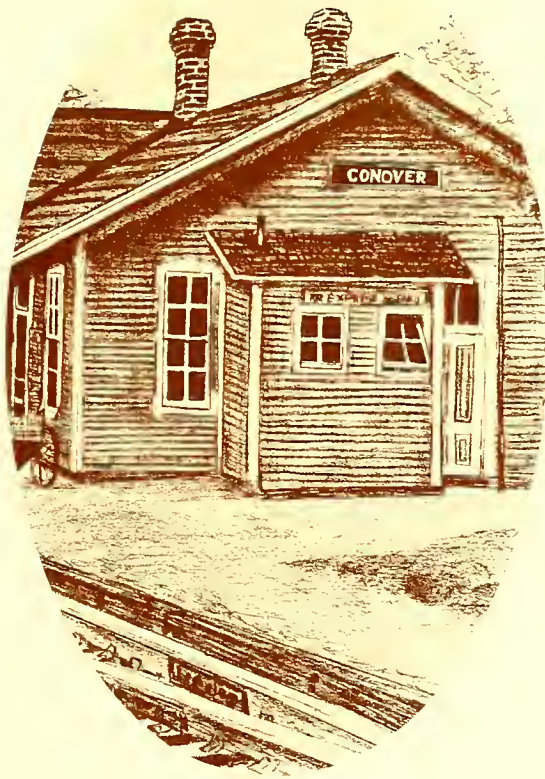
Original Interior of Church



Concordia Christian Day School, turn of the Century



Chapter VII



"And now, one and all, let us bid you good cheer,
we pray for a blessing on your labors here..."



Skyline View of Conover Looking NNW

The high drama and excitement — sometimes bordering on the edge of panic — which characterize so much of the first twenty years of both congregation and college move now into a period of dailiness and ordinariness — if in fact there is anything simply ordinary about the Christian life.

Pastor Dau was called shortly after the dedication of the church to the Midwest where he was to serve twenty-one years as Professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and later for six years as President of Valparaiso University where he retired in 1929. Concordia College called to the Presidency the Rev. George Romoser, professor at the school with only a one year's absence since his graduation from St. Louis in 1892. The congregation extended a Call to the Rev. Paul Bischoff, a very recent graduate of the St. Louis Seminary. Pastor Bischoff served both Concordia and St. John's for the longest pastorate the congregation had yet experienced. These two servants, Romoser and Bischoff installed into office in 1899, ushered in a period of stability that neither the college nor congregation had previously known.

Life in this period 1889-1919 is perhaps best remembered or even experienced not by description but by "rare flashes of human drama" — important and trivial, sad and happy, dramatic and "ordinary".

This chronicle of extracts from the newspaper, excerpts from college and congregational minutes and personal remembrances will carry these simple identifications, *O-N-E*, Observer-News-Enterprise, *Cong.*, Congregational Minutes and Reports, *Coll.*, College Minutes and letters, with the personal quotes individually noted.

"Edgar Dellinger has entered Concordia College which sets the score at 114. This is the largest number of students the school has ever had since it has been in the control of the Missouri Synod, and I think I am safe in saying that it is as large a school as there is in the county." *O-N-E*, '99

"The Board (College Trustees) met in called session at four o'clock, p.m. to consider the resignation of W. H. T. Dau as teacher and president of Concordia College. Present at this meeting of the local board — J. M. Smith, President of Board, J. Hunsucker — W. P. Smyre, M. M. Hollar, J. F. Dellinger, J. C. Yount and J. A. Yount." *Coll.*, March '99

"The Board adopted the following paper as a Call from the Board to Rev. G. A. Romoser... We promise him an annual salary of \$600... by the aid of the Synod which they have promised... The committee was appointed to look at and consider the purchase of a suitable lot and building of a President's house — to see what can be done... The Board ratified the election of three new members as Trustees by the English Synod of Mo. & Ohio S. — Rev. F. Kuegele of Virginia, Rev. Hemmeter and Mr. Friede." *Coll.*, '99

"The Board of Trustees of Concordia College met in semi-annual meeting on the above date, June 21, 1900, at 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon... It was stated... In regard to the looking up of a suitable location for the house for the President of the College that a lot has been secured from Mr. Robert Simmons of the land lying to the south of the College Campus by making a partial payment on it... It was resolved that no cows should be allowed to graze on the campus or be tied to the fence outside the campus and that notices be posted forbidding this and warning all persons against damaging any of the College property. The President of the Board was furthermore instructed to arrange with Mr. Davidson or one of the other neighbors living to the west of the campus to keep a watchful eye on the campus...

"It was resolved that the offer of the present faculty of three teachers to assume all the work for the next year without asking for a fourth man, be accepted...

Calling attention to Section IV of the Charter of the College, by which all persons are prohibited from the manufacture or selling liquor within a radius of two miles of the College. It was resolved that a copy of this Section, and a notice calling attention to it be filed by the President and Secretary of the Board be posted in a public place in the town." *Coll., June, 1900*

"The Treasurer is instructed to pay Mr. Davidson one dollar for having watched the property during the summer months against vandalism." *Coll., Fall 1900*

"THE WEDDING". The double wedding at Conover last Thursday was one of the most attractive affairs ever seen in this county. The contracting parties were Miss Clara Huit to Rev. Carol O. Smith of Scranton, Miss., and Miss Effie Huit to Rev. P. C. Henry of Waynesboro, Virginia.

Long before the ceremonies began, the neatly decorated church was crowded with people from all over the county. The wedding march was played by Miss Cora B. Yount. Up the right aisle of the church came Messrs. Oswel Kreinheder and Oscar Reisig and Miss Daicey Huit with Mr. George Mennen. Behind them were Miss Effie Huit and Mr. Henry. While up the left aisle came Mrs. D. F. Smith and G. W. Rowe and Miss Dora Goodman with Mr. Richard Oelschlaeger, followed by Miss Clara Huit and Mr. Smith. The two couples came to the altar together and were united in marriage by Rev. Paul Bishoff (sic., Bischoff).

After the marriage services, there was an elegant supper at the brides homes and the happy couples took the train at Claremont for their future homes." *O-N-E, Dec., 1900* (Almost all of the above were present or former students of the College and a number of the men were ordained as pastors.)

"Solomon Spria passed with his load of peddler's ware. Solomon is a good fellow." *O-N-E, '01*



A. D. Herman

"Concordia College opened its Fall term September 11, 1901, and has attendance of forty students in college classes. The school has no preparatory department this year. The school of the Lutheran congregation of the place is taught by Mr. Frank Smyre." *O-N-E, '01*

"Miss Celia Jordan has good weather for her Spring opening. Her store is really a beauty. She has a complete line of Fall and Winter millinery." *O-N-E, '02*

"The College closing exercises proper were chiefly in the hands of the graduating class. The following are the names together with the subjects on which they spoke. Eula V. Yount, "One Day Is Worth Two Tomorrows", Mr. Frank Hemmeter, "Growth Is The Result of Struggle", Miss Cora D. Yount, "True Nobility". The literary address was delivered by the Rev. M. J. Bakke of Charlotte, North Carolina. Beginning with a familiar quotation from Hamlet, "To Be Or Not To Be", he gradually let (sic., led) up to his theme; failure in life and how to avoid it. From a number of examples, it was shown why so many young men and women make a dismal failure when they might just as well succeed. *O-N-E, June, 1902*

GENERAL NEWS: "Gen Joe Wheeler is one of the Americans having a "high time" in London. He is there to attend the Coronation festivities." *O-N-E, June, 1902*

"The Board of Trustees has built a commodious and tastefully furnished house for the President of the College... The contractors were the well-known carpenters, Setzer and McRee." *O-N-E, June '02*

"Some of us attended the Lutheran Reunion at Hickory last Tuesday. Everybody was friendly... It seems probable that all Lutherans in N.C. belonging to the United Synod will unite in one State Synod and support only one college. Those connected with the Missouri maintain a conservation Lutheranism with a good degree of consistency." *O-N-E, '02*

"Your reporter has neuralgia caused by bad molars." *O-N-E, '02*



James Jordan Barringer and sons at a rest stop along Catawba River, while on a trip to Boone for apples.

"Henry Bernard Hemmeter was installed as professor at the College in September, 1902, from the Presidency of the Church Extension Board. Among his duties, along with teaching, will be the editorship of the *Lutheran Witness*, which is performed by the students of the College. He is a strong man and will be a valuable addition to the faculty. He is from Pittsburgh." *O-N-E, Sept., '02*

"The twentieth year of Concordia College begins with forty in College classes and some twenty in the primary school (parochial). The latter is taught in the building by Miss Cora D. Yount, graduate of the Class of 1902." *O-N-E, Sept. '02.*



Rev. Dr. H. B. Hemmeter

"Professor Weiss has purchased the lot opposite the boys dormitory. The residence for the president of the college was erected for a cost of \$1,434...Requests were made to S. R. R. asking that Conover be made a coupon station and noted the fact that vestibuled trains 30 and 35 would stop at Conover for passengers detraining or boarding Conover...The wood shed was built on campus at a cost of \$40. The new college was painted and a new roof put on the boys dormitory...The meeting adjourned. These repairs were made without cost to Synod." *Coll., May, 1903*

"Last Friday, there was a rear-end collision between Conover and Hickory of a S. R. R. and Carolina & N. W. freight train. The C & NW train was stopped by the blowing out of a cylinder head and before the S. R. R. train which was following, could be flagged down ran into the other train... Two of the C & NW trainmen got into a fight over the accident and one of them was brought to Newton and bound over to court by Esquire Fleming for using a deadly weapon." *O-N-E, Summer, 1903*

"After a long delay with some damage, the household goods of Mrs. Marie Koch reached Conover by freight from Cleveland, Ohio. Mrs. Koch has rented and lives in Mrs. Mary A. Little's dwelling. Her four children attend the high school department of Concordia College." *O-N-E, August, 1903*

"Parents who know the value of sound, thorough education for their children will procure it for them if possible. The Lutheran parochial school has been going on for two weeks with an attendance of forty-four. Mrs. Koch has had five years experience in school teaching at Cleveland. She is fond of her work, and the little folks soon learn to love her and also their exercises. Mrs. Koch has a good piano and can teach piano and organ music." *O-N-E, 1903*

"Good health prevails. Rev. J. M. Smith was very sick last Sunday but is well again. He still preaches at St. Peter's Church the second and fourth Sundays." *O-N-E, Fall, 1903*

"Mr. Boyd Coyner of Virginia has begun his studies in Concordia College." *O-N-E, Fall, 1903*

"Our common schools begin this week. Mr. James Rice will teach the one at Conover." *O-N-E, Fall, 1903*

"The number of students enrolled is thirty-four... It was discussed after the meeting that something must be done about housing for the female students. It was further discussed of the dire need for pianos for the school." *Coll., June, 1904*

"Some men of the R. R. service have started cursing Conover because at times a throng of young persons crowd around the train when they stop and upon departure are reveled with rocks and sticks. Rowdy, Rowdy..." *O-N-E, Summer, 1904*



"Mrs. Marie Koch was given approval (Board of Trustees) to receive for music lessons fifteen cents for one half-hour." *Coll., Summer, 1904*

"At the closing of Mr. Harrison's Writing School at Smith's Chapel the scholars presented him with a fountain pen!" *O-N-E, Summer, '04*

"Miss Cora B. Yount and Rev. George E. Mennen were married... He left with his bride for Detroit where he takes charge of a mission church." *O-N-E, August, 1904*

"The Lutherans have taken a notion to complete their parsonage. A preacher needs a shelter whether he has a family or not." *O-N-E, Fall, 1904*

"Smiles and joys were felt at the college today. Two pianos were obtained from N. Y., one from Mr. Stang with freight prepaid, and the other through Mr. Martensen, "From a Friend." *Coll., June, 1905*

..."A degree of Master of Literature be conferred on the Rev. J. R. Braner of Jersey City, N. J." *Coll., June, 1905*

"The field here in the southeast is a very difficult one but we feel confident that patience and faithful labor will not remain unrewarded. We need and need badly men and money. A travelling missionary or field secretary would somewhat relieve your faculty and we believe would better conserve the missionary interest

of the Church in this field." *Letter to Synod Mission Board, Summer, 1905*

"Mr. Milmann (sic., G. E. Moehlmann) of Wisconsin with his wife and children arrived last week. He owns and occupies the fine property lately vacated by Professor Hemmeter." *O-N-E, Summer, 1905*

"Mr. John Rockett lately made a trip to Oyama. He thinks he would like to own land in that country." *O-N-E, Summer, 1905*

"Still no hedge or grass planted. The question to authorize authority to the President of the College to check on what the boys bring from home, such as a little wine or a little whiskey and to allow them to have only what he thinks they should have." *Coll., August, 1905*

"Rev. J. M. Smith was seventy-five last month. He enjoys health and life as much as ever. Indeed a man who is industrious, temperate and a Christian all his life lives most and best." *O-N-E, Fall, 1905*

"Concordia College notifies us of a representation of students from all eastern states, north inclusive." *O-N-E, Fall, 1905*

"Would you believe it, it was reported in the Hickory Mercury that a Col. Thorton says his electric power line is an absolute certainty? It will run from Hickory to Shelby-Lincolnton, Newton and Conover." *O-N-E, Fall, 1905*



Hickory Handle & Mfg. Co. Employees

"It would be a sad day in N. C. when all education must be done solely by the state and, reserving Christian schools. This idea can never be realized while Christianity is with us. The salt of the earth loses its saltiness when there is no sound religious instruction. The Sunday School started by Robert Ralkes is but a small beginning." *O-N-E, 1905*

"Professor Luecke will preach the Sunday sermon in German, mainly for the families from Wisconsin, and for any other number of us that can understand this discourse. ...351 souls, 218 communicants, 51 day school students." *Pastoral Report, 1905*

"Rev. J. S. Coyner is way laid and knocked down with a slingshot mysteriously brought upon him near 8:00 p.m. at the station. His assailant stood in the moonlit shadow of a huge white oak. Coyner states, 'What else can happen in this place?'" *O-N-E, 1905*

..."The town is full of Yankees, three families from Wisconsin and fifteen bird hunters from Ohio. All are delighted with Conover and its climate. They were surprised to find people gathering lettuce from their gardens in mid-winter...Smyre rumors that 'These Wisconsinites have come to make cheese.'" *O-N-E, Winter, 1905*

"Our new Postmaster still sells thirteen two-cent stamps for a cent and a quarter." *O-N-E, Summer, '06*

"The Piedmont Bell Company is charging fifty cents for the use of the telephone. If the people living along these connections would put up their own poles, no further monthly fee would be charged." *O-N-E, Summer, '06*

"Two beggars have lately visited our place. One was a man born blind, from Iredell. Some of us each gave him five cents that he might pay for a night's lodging. The other was a man on his knees, whining out a pitiable story of misfortune and neglect, from a remote county. He traveled in a sorry looking wagon, drawn by a sorry looking horse, driven by a sorry looking man. The beggar and his outfit seemed to some of us rather too professional. He did not likely receive any large money while with us." *O-N-E, Summer, '06*

..."As we celebrate the first decade of our church... Rev. J. P Smith of Concord preached in the morning from Romans 3:24-34. In the afternoon, G. A. Moser preached an occasional sermon from Zeph. 3:9." *Cong., 1906*

"Mr. Jerome Bolick has received a patent on his steel wheel with further testing, hope is viewed using them in the manufacture of automobiles." *O-N-E, Summer '06*



The famous Conover Buggy



An Old Soldier's Reunion scene at Newton

"Last Friday evening some twenty young persons spent a pleasant social time at Mr. Raymond Miller's. Among them were Misses Georgia Hewitt, Nona Bolick, Ruth Malchoir and Clara Machlman (sic., Moehlmann). Among the amusements was guessing the number of seeds in a melon. Two nice pictures were the prizes. Mr. Thomas Hewitt won the first and Miss Gertrude Machlman (sic., Moehlmann) the second prize.

Several persons from Wisconsin, friends of Mr. and Mrs. Maehlman (sic., Moehlmann), were also here. They have come east to the Jamestown Exposition." *O-N-E, August, '06*

"The Register of Deeds sold forty-two marriage licenses this month and everybody is not married yet." *O-N-E, Dec., 1906*

Most persons seem to have had grippe, or at least a cold, lately." *O-N-E, February, '07*

"From now on for the next five weeks, let everybody center his enthusiasm on the soldiers reunion and the Confederate monument to be unveiled in Newton, August 15th. The people of Catawba are honoring themselves in erecting this monument to the valor of the soldiers of the great war between the States. Lets make the day of its unveiling the greatest day even known in Catawba. It is of infinitely more importance than politics or anything else." *O-N-E, Summer, '07*

"On Wednesday, September 11th, the next term of Concordia College will open. In certain circles, there has been lately some agitation as to the college property — lands and buildings — Conover. Legally, there is no problem to solve. Originally, the property was provided for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a Lutheran School of higher grade at Conover... It was never conveyed to the Tennessee Synod nor to any donors as such. The only lawful use to which the property can be put is for a school conducted on the principle and doctrines of the Lutheran faith

"The installation of Rev. A. Haentzschell as professor in Concordia College took place in the Lutheran Church last Sunday afternoon. A suitable discourse was delivered by Prof. G. A. Romoser, who spoke impressively of the nature and need of Christian education. Basing his doctrine on a Bible passage, he emphasized the necessity of separating the good from the bad, the holy from the profane.

Pastor P. Bischoff is still unwell, but convalescent.

Rev. J. M. Smith has been suffering from grippe. One Saturday he was walking on the sidewalk past the dwelling of Mr. P. C. Lail, when he fell to the ground. We hope he will recover. He has had fairly good health until the present.

On Sunday, we had the pleasure of hearing a sermon by Rev. A. Hahn, at St. Johns. He preached there for Rev. Bischoff. Pastor Hahn complains of poor health; but he is still able to preach a good sermon.

O-N-E, August, 1907

"JUST RECEIVED!

One car load Buggies. Wagons and Surries that will be Sold cheap. Also Disc and Drag Harrows. A full line of Harness and a good stock of Hardware

ALSO TWO GOOD HORSES FOR SALE.

The store of R. L. Hunsucker will be continued under the management of

L. E. HUNSUCKER,
CONOVER, N. C."

O-N-E, 1907

"God has greatly blessed our congregation. It consists today of 62 voting, 249 communicant members, 398 souls. Several families came to us when St. Paul's disbanded a few years ago and six German Lutheran families moved to N. C. from Wisconsin. Services and Sunday School are held every Sunday; Holy Communion six times a year, Catechising three times a week, from October to April." *Cong., October, '08*

"The congregation has no debt. It raises about \$1,000 a year at the present time, \$350 for pastor's salary, \$175 for home purposes, and \$175 for Synodical purposes. Value of church property is about \$5,000." *Cong., October, '08*

"Mr. James Bolick is Superintendent and teacher of the Bible class and the other teachers are Lottie Yount, Alice Eckard, Carrier Hunsucker, Lizzie Yount, Loy Bolick and Walter Bischoff. Average attendance about 100." *Cong., October, '08*

"Our hopes for a teacher from the Addison, Illinois, Teacher's Seminary, or training school have been realized at last. Mr. Richard Bendick, who was graduated last June, has accepted our Call. He was installed September 7th in the presence of a large congregation. The children of the school had learned a song for the occasion, with which they welcomed their teacher.

And now, one and all, let us bid you good cheer,
We pray for a blessing on your labors here,
May many bright jewels be your blest reward,
And crowns of rejoicing in the day of the Lord."

Cong., October, '08



The Moser Homeplace on Third St. N.E. was at a time occupied by Rev. Prof. C. O. Smith. It was destroyed by fire on the day the Rev. Prof. C. O. Smith moved. Beyond it, to the right is the Hubert Smith house.

Why Conover Don't Grow

Not for want of brilliant preachers,
Not for lack of able teachers,
No, Not that,
Doctor Pat,
But for want of zeal (made) active
And go forwardness attractive,
Yes, sir, that is why, I trove,
Conover don't grow.

Not for want of wealth or beauty,
Or good health combined with duty,
No, not that,
Poet Pat,
But for want of love-inviting,
So inducing, so inciting
That prospective men may know
Conover should grow.

Let Progressiveness awaken,
(Sleepiness has it o'rtaken.)
Yes, let that,
Doctor Pat,
Now arise from out its slumber
And go forth to swell the number
Of citizens, and then we'll know
Conover will grow.



*Mr. Ed Herman
Merchant*

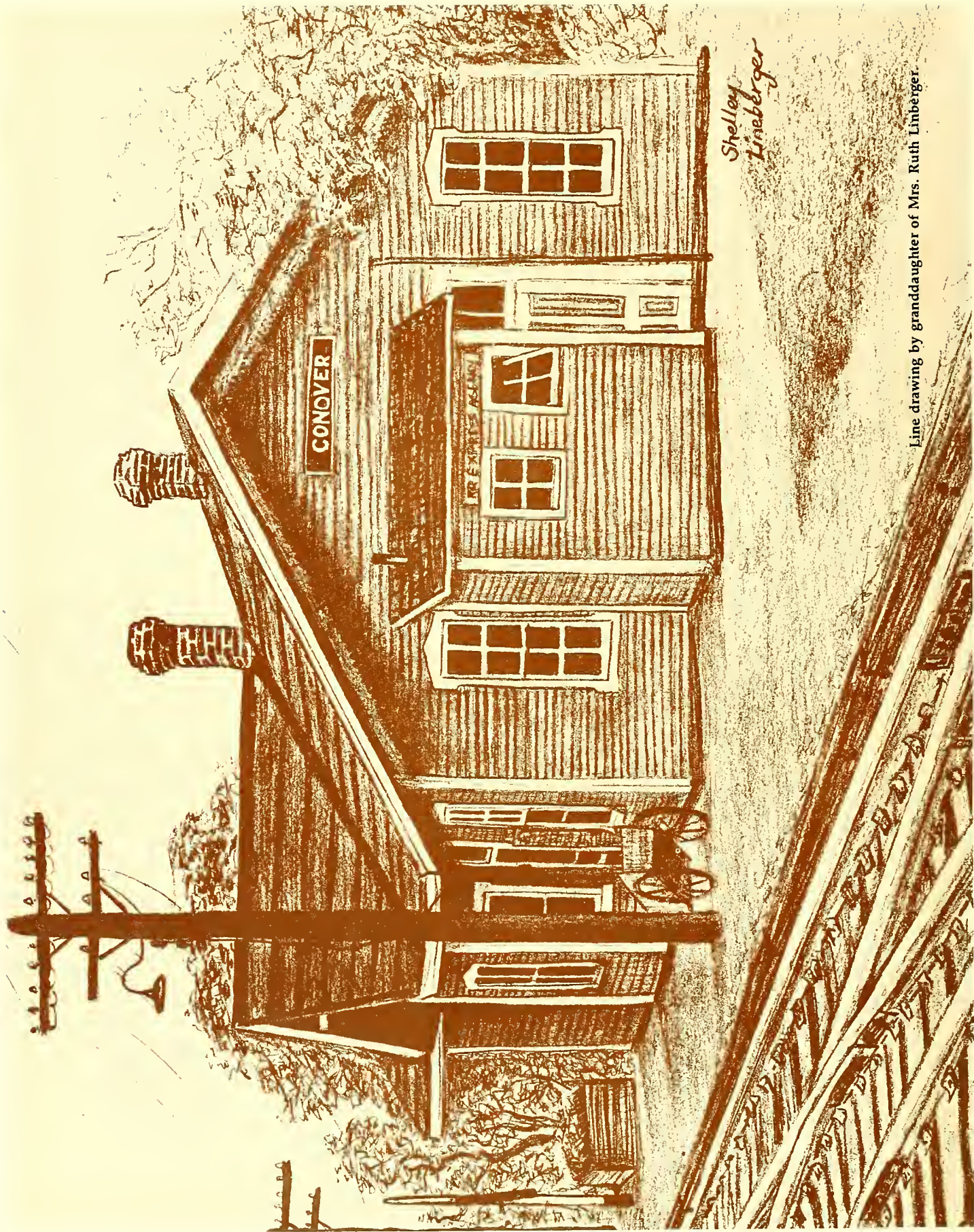


Mattie Miller

Ay, let every property owner
In that wee little nod-land "goner."
Poor or fat,
Poet Pat,
Now invite prospective buyers,
Whether Reverends or but friars.
And set his price aright and show
Conover should grow.

Let no man be so deluded
As to think (my self included)
"Tit for tat,"
butter for fat,
You kill my dog, I'll kill your kitty
Ever sounded wise or witty
Enough to justify this blow:
Conover don't grow.

Yet I can't but in conclusion
Say, by way of a kind allusion,
That, yes, that
Doctor Pat
Should not scratch his heady so hoary,
Lest it become both sore and gory,
Yea, and yet not clearly shown
Why, Conover don't grow. O-N-E, 1908



Line drawing by granddaughter of Mrs. Ruth Linberger.

Chapter VIII



"Concordia College spoke English;
the Missouri Synod spoke German."



The year 1911 began as an exciting one for the people of Concordia and their parent church body, the English Synod; for in May of the year the small church body officially merged with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Although the, now English *District* would continue to maintain an identity as a non-geographic district of the larger church body, it could, because of the union, look to the "mother" church for additional funds for its two "colleges".

A pastor of the English Synod at this convention which voted to unite with "Missouri" provides us with a description of an "unofficial gathering" of Concordia alumni. He writes, "This convention brought together some seventy-five ministers from all parts of the country and about ten of this number were men who had received their preparatory training at Concordia College, Conover, North Carolina. The evening of May 15th was very profitably and happily spent. All reminiscences and memories were dug out of the fertile soil of our hearts, the members confining their remarks to things pertaining to Conover and North Carolina affairs. . . . Before we adjourned, it was found that the old ties of loyalty and devotion to our old Alma Mater which had become somewhat loose and torn through force of circumstance, were again tightened and strengthened.

"We wish to be remembered to all our Carolina friends, to make known to them that old memories still linger and are sweet and fresh, that we love to think of the days spent under the golden sun, in your balmy climate, in your beautiful country, under your hospitable roofs. Concordia College, our Alma Mater, may pass from view, or at least undergo a radical change, but we are still held tightly by the bonds of former days." (*Letter from pastor and former student at Concordia College, May, 1911.*)

This anonymous pastor seems unaware of the "change and passing from view" that the college was undergoing. Synod wanted a school that would prepare *men* for the ministry. Western North Carolina Lutherans simply wanted a school to serve the higher education needs of their *sons and daughters*. Synod it seems sympathized with but had little understanding of local needs and even less money to support this local venture. The Catawba County supporters of the school had little appreciation for Synod's single-minded pursuit of pastors. Southern Lutherans wanted money and missionaries to labor in local fields, "white unto the harvest". Synod was devoted to gathering together German-speaking Lutherans — most of whom lived in the North and Midwest. Concordia College spoke *English*; the Missouri Synod spoke *German*.

Rev. C. O. Smith in his autobiography writes, "Concordia College was a thing which, after the first flush of joy over getting into this field, was looked upon by the Missouri Synod as more or less a 'white elephant' which was robbing the treasury of good money which could be used to much better advantage in other fields. Southern people were poor and backward and the college was co-educational, which was a thing radically contrary to the established policy of Synod which maintained colleges *ONLY* for educating young men for the ministry."

Upon receiving the Call to serve as professor at Concordia, Pastor Smith says, "Professor C. A. Weiss, Professor Ad Haentzschell and myself were left to keep this Synod's sick unwanted child from dieing (sic.) an enemy (sic.) death."

In the summer of 1911 Synod removed for a period of five years the two upper grade classes and reduced the college to a Christian High School. (Pastor Smith suggests it "decapitated" the college.) Once again, the school's future seemed to be in jeopardy.

What began as a bright year for all was darkened even further on July 3rd with the death of Pastor Paul Bischoff. He had been serving in a weakened condition for a number of months because of chronic "heart trouble".



The Rev. Paul Bischoff

And at Christmas the congregations voted him a six-month vacation to "restore his strength". He returned to his pastorate in June determined to continue but enroute home from a funeral service he had conducted at St. John's, he collapsed and the next day died of apparent appendicitis complications at the age of thirty-five. Pastor Bischoff was buried in Conover Cemetery, Professors Romoser and Hemmeter officiating at the service. (Sixty-seven years later to the day of his death, his wife Mrs. Edith Coyner Bischoff was laid to rest beside him at the age of ninety-five.)

With the merging of the English Synod with Missouri and the death of Pastor Bischoff both the congregation and college were again to pass through a period of rapid change. Pastors and professors were installed and bid rapid farewell in rapid succession. In the College, Romoser, Weiss and Hemmeter left. The congregation was to be served by five pastors within an eight-year period, 1911-1919. This unsettling time seems to be paralleled in the personal lives of the Congregation and College.

Concordia was served in the year 1912 by Rev. E. T. Coyner who served just long enough for the "pounding" following his installation. He was installed in January and left in December. Professor Haentzschell of the College faculty was Called in spite of the Synod's recommendation of Professor W. O. Bischoff. A vote to make his Call unanimous was defeated according to the congregational minutes. He declined the Call and the Synod's recommendation of Bischoff, the former pastor's brother was voted this time unanimously. He accepted the Call with the proviso that he be allowed to complete the school term. Professor Bischoff was to serve for only two years.

College minutes for the year 1913 chronicle a fist fight between two of the professors and a Board demand for a public apology on the part of one because of "the greatness of the offense and harm that the brother had done himself, the college and the whole Lutheran cause in this section of the country".

The newspaper also reports the misfortune of Professor C. A. Weiss, which fortunately had a happy ending; "Two of Prof. C. A. Weiss's boys, about eight and ten years old, at Conover last Friday went into the loft of the cow stable to experiment with a new lamp the Professor had recently bought and warned them not to handle, either from matches used in lighting the lamp or from an explosion, straw was set on fire. The older boy beat a hasty retreat into the house for help but the younger tried to put out the fire and stuck to the fight til his hands and face were burned. When Professor Weiss reached the scene, the younger boy was sliding down the steps with the flames right after him. The building was entirely consumed. The younger son was not seriously hurt."



The Rev. E. T. Coyner



The Rev. W. O. Bischoff

This period seems to have been a watershed moment in our history for many reasons, not the least of which was the death of the Rev. John Melancthon Smith in 1913 at the age of eighty-three.

Pastor Smith's passing marked the end of an era of pastors and people who had lived as adults through the period of The War Between the States and emerged as leaders in the creation of a new hope. His tireless efforts as pastor of countless missions in western North Carolina and as a guiding force in the early years of the college gave his life and the lives of many others like him an importance far beyond what was readily apparent.

Pastor Smith was committed beyond most of his contemporaries to a Confessional Lutheran identity in North Carolina. In the course of his ministry he was locked out of his own church, unappreciated by many of his contemporaries, overlooked by his peers and virtu-

ally unknown in the Church at large. Yet at his death, the newspaper remembered him with these words, "For fifty-six years he was a Lutheran preacher and we know of no man in the county who has left a more lasting impression on the people than he. He was a man of strong intellect, of positive convictions, unswerving courage and a pulpit orator of commanding ability... As a theologian he ranked with the most noted preachers of the South. He and the Rev. Daniel May of the Methodist Church once engaged in a week's debate in Newton on doctrinal questions. It was a combat by two giants and when it was over the general verdict was that it was a draw." As much as this man's life may have meant to the Community at large, his associations with Concordia give him a special place in blessed memory. It was Pastor Smith who first gathered a small group of Lutherans in Conover and assisted in creating the community that would one day become Concordia Lutheran Church. It was also this faithful servant who as much as anyone else was responsible for the establishment of the college. He is remembered neither as the first pastor nor as the first president, but with his devotion he has a place among the first in our remembrance.

Not every change during this time was "momentous" however. Changes occur in other, more pleasant and subtle ways as Catawba County is treated to another whimsey of progress... "The first football ever played in Catawba County was witnessed last Saturday afternoon on the Catawba College grounds between the Catawba College team and the Davidson scrub team. The Davidson boys won by a score of 30-0. Considering that this is the first year that Catawba has ever tried to get up a football team and that there were only two men on the team that had ever seen a game before..." *O-N-E 1913*.

Conover was responsible in the year 1913 for the county Fourth of July celebration. A request was sent out

through the newspaper "that all who own automobiles and bicycles bring them to Conover and show how many there are in the county"... The address of Welcome will be given by Mr. S. W. Jordan and will include greetings from the Hon. C. F. McKesson, Hon. W. C. Feimster and Hon. W. A. Self of Hickory. The nail driving contest by ladies gives a first prize of a box of coconut bon-bons by Barger's Grocery. Other prizes will be offered by P. E. Isenhower, Mr. L. E. Hunsucker, Mr. Jerome Bolick and Sons and Mr. E. A. Herman. Three other newspaper items of local interest offer insight into the time, "Electric lights have been strung from C. D. Drum's corner to the corner of Young Brothers Store. There will be a light every 18 inches on the wire. Plans are in the making for these lights to extend from Dixiedale through Ridgeview", "Automobiling to the Providence Mill Pond is now a favorite pastime enjoyed by the young men and girls of Conover...", "One day last week Mr. Jim Crouse's horse broke loose from the hitching post in Newton and went over to the jockey ground at the old academy and kicked a mule belonging to Mr. Mack Caldwell. The mule's leg was broken and had to be shot. It was a good mule worth about \$200."

In 1914, the congregation made two important decisions, the installation of electric lights and stained glass windows. The electric lights were installed in the church and parsonage at a cost of \$89.06. The memorial windows were dedicated on July 11 at a cost of \$291.14.

The decisions made by the college in that year were, as is most often the case with boards and committees, of uneven import. The college minutes of 1914 inform us... "a new outhouse was built for the boys at a cost of \$35." And on June 5, it was reported that Professor Hemmeter had removed the dilapidated fence around the campus. Continued requests for the removal of the old fence and the placement of a hedge had gone unheeded. Eye witnesses report that in frustration, Professor Hemmeter kicked the fence down... "His action was ratified by the Board." A request from the President of the Indian Mission in Clintonville, Wisconsin, asking that the college accept an Indian student was denied because of "affairs prevailing in the college and the neighborhood".

Rev. W. O. Bischoff was released by the Congregation in June of 1915 to accept a Call to Indiana. The resignation of Pastor Bischoff ended not only the pastorate of the Bischoffs at Concordia, but also the publication at Concordia of a small but significant mission paper called *The Lutheran Pioneer*. Pastor Bischoff's father, the Rev. Rudolph A. Bischoff, professor for many years at Concordia College in Fort Wayne, Indiana, had founded this periodical in the year 1879. In the words of its founder *The Lutheran Pioneer* had as its first aim... "...to march with or before our missionaries in the South among the freedmen and prepare the way for them." Concern among some of these German Lutheran immigrants for the plight of the newly freed slaves was deep enough to





The Rev. O. W. Krieheder

encourage a number of missionaries to move into a new land, a new culture and among a newly emerging people to provide both pastoral care and sound Lutheran doctrine in the midst of the confusion that followed The War Between the States.

In retirement Pastor Rudolph Bischoff lived with his sons in Conover and published *The Pioneer* from here May 1904 - December 1912. A note from Dr. Ludwig Fuerbringer, then President of the Synod, to the *Pioneer* editor in 1928, includes this touching remembrance. "It has been my privilege in bygone years to visit our mission fields among the colored people in North Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana, and I have found many traces of *The Pioneer's* wholesome influence. In one instance, I remember having seen *The Pioneer* used as wallpaper in a poor Negro hut in North Carolina and both parents and children would read its contents again and again. It may interest you to know that I have been a constant reader of the *Pioneer* since its first appearance, my parents having subscribed for it in order to interest me in the blessed work of missions. And one thing that kept my interest alive in my college days was the very able editorial work of the sainted Prof. R. A. Bischoff, whose articles and items were quite often tinged with his quaint Christian humor."

Mission work among "the colored people in North Carolina" touched Conover and Concordia although it seems neither deeply nor with much duration. The Rev. W. H. Lash (Losh?), a black missionary in the Piedmont, established a mission congregation in the community and we know that it existed as early as 1904 and was closed or rather faded from view in the mid-thirties. The following newspaper articles provide a glimpse of this work in our midst...

"In the interest of the mission work among the colored people of our State, Rev. J. C. Schmidt of Greensboro made an address. Some things he told from his experi-



Left to right: Professor Martin Coyner, Dr. W. H. T. Dau, Professor O. W. Krieheder, Professor Fredericks.

ence among these poor people were amusing but the people showed their hearty interest in his work by giving him a nice contribution." *From the minutes of a 1904 Augustana Conference meeting at St. John's Lutheran Church.*

..."A colored preacher named Lash, who serves the colored mission in Rowan and Catawba Counties preached at Conover in the Negroe's school house last Sunday night. He has a few members there. He preached well, having been educated in a mission school at Greensboro and then at a school in Illinois." *O-N-E, May 1905*

"Rev. W. H. Lash, Negro missionary, will dedicate a new chapel at this place next Sunday. Friends of the mission are invited to the all day services." *Correspondence of the Enterprise, Letter from Conover, August 19, 1907*

..."A harvest home festival will be held by our colored Lutherans on Sunday, November 10, which is Luther's birthday." *O-N-E, November 1909*

Some members of Concordia remember well Mrs. Mary Mobley, who was perhaps the last living member of this "colored mission in Catawba County" and of services conducted at the mission. Older members of the congregation also have recollections of Black Lutherans worshipping in the congregational Services, but no one seems to know who these faithful were or where they went. The last of these Lutherans seems to have disappeared from Sunday worship before 1930 without record or notice.

The year 1915 was marked by a change in the administration of the College as Professor Hemmester was given the General Managership of the College; the Board obviously remembering his earlier success with the old fence. According to the College minutes the first order under his new authority was "to order the woodshed whitewashed."

After a year's vacancy, when once again the congregation was served by college professors, the Rev. O. W. Kreinheder was installed as pastor April 30, 1916, and

served until December, 1918. During his brief pastorate, two interesting changes in the Service and Liturgy were made. Lenten services were changed by order of the Voters Assembly from Sunday evenings to Wednesday evenings and the "Exhortation" preparatory to the Communion Service was omitted.

The Church Council minutes also report in April of 1918... "The time was change (sic., changed) for service at 11 o'clock in the morning the year through and evening 8 O'Clock be the new time". The Church Council recommend a chalanger (sic., chalice?) be perchase (sic., purchased) this is to be give (sic., given) by the Young Ladies Society... A committee to form a Lutheran League consists of five are C. S. Coyner, C. R. Brady, E. V. Little, Noah Huitt, J. P. Yount. This year was also written in sadness with the death of two sons of the congregation, J. C. Hunsucker and G. D. Lail, who lost their lives in the Great World War.

The vacancy created by Pastor Kreinheder's return to the College as President was fortunately for the congregation not only a brief one but also the last vacancy Concordia would experience for twenty-five years. The Congregation nominated Professor F. Wahlers, Rev. W. H. Dale, J. M. Bailey, F. C. G. Schrumm, L. Bucheimer, H. Kohn, J. R. Graebner, and R. Oelschlaeger. The quarterly meeting of the congregation in which the Call would be extended had to be postponed because of "the quarantine against the Spanish Influenza". The Congregation met however in early November and added to the list of candidates the names of J. Franklin Yount, a son of the Congregation, and the Rev. G. E. Mennen, who had declined a Call to Concordia four years earlier. Pastor Mennen was nominated on the first ballot. He accepted the Call and moved from the congregations of Bethel and St. John's to be installed in his new charge, January 1, 1919.

Pastor Mennen brought with him not only his wife — the former Cora B. Yount a daughter of Concordia Congregation — and his family, but a wealth of pastoral experience in the area, a dedication to the College from which he had graduated and a shepherd's heart which was to serve well the Congregation for the next quarter century.



*Mr. and Mrs. Elkana Eckard
First Trustee, Concordia Church*



Martin Coyner, C. O. Smith, Walter P. Hunsucker



Student Body, 1918



Graduation class of 1917-18, Concordia High School.

Fred Freed
Bernard Herman
Everett Long

Ernst Moehlmann
Frederick Sattelmeier
John Westerman

Thelma Cline
Claudia Hunsucker
Ruth Rockett



"Joe" Herman Yount



President's House

Chapter IX



"One could have slid on custards chicken bones and pickles."



Main Street

Turning the corner under the "stop-light", riding toward the railroad, on the dirt, tree-lined main street of Conover. The two men on the right are Mr. Sam Jordan with his bird dog and Mr. Robert Herman. In back of them is the Philo Isenhower store. The garage on the left belonged to Mr. Clayton Isenhower and Albert Deal; above it is the White Store. The well beyond was the noon-time gathering area for wagons, steeds and drivers. Water was drawn and placed in large tubs for the horses; such water tubs were on every corner of Main Street.

SIX TRANSPORTS ARRIVE BRINGING 7,740 FIGHTERS

Virtually every State
in the Union represented.

Many maimed for life.

"Some who started home with crutches threw them away, 'cured' by joy of homecoming. Welcomed home as heroic sons of the nation, 7,740 more soldiers, sailors, marines and aviators, representing virtually every state in the union, entered fogbound New York harbor today on six large transports from European ports. The tales the men tell about one another were narrations of American high courage on French battlefields, on the open seas and in the air above France and England. Hundreds of the men maimed for life by wounds, received in some of the war's heaviest fighting were hurried to hospitals, and the others went to camps, where they will be demobilized."

The Charlotte Observer, December 12, 1918



The Conover Nurse Corps, May 26, 1918

It is a time for new beginnings! The nation begins to recover from the trauma of war and Concordia also is part of the change and new direction which our society as a whole begins to experience.

Every first year student of psychology is introduced to the psychological stages through which a child passes in his development toward maturity. We all speak with authority about the "Terrible Twos". We are, however, only beginning to discover that these stages in maturation continue throughout life in the emotionally healthy person. What is true of individuals is also true of institutions. Historians note familiar patterns and cycles in the development of nations, cultures, and corporations. It is revealing also to graph the stages through which an

institution like a healthy congregation moves.

As a congregation and as a community Concordia has passed from infancy to childhood to adolescence and is now moving and growing toward young adulthood.

As the year 1919 begins, Concordia is in a stage of transition. There is a full flow of young adult energy flooding the congregation, tempered by a somewhat enlightened or at least chastened vision of future responsibilities. For a decade and a half Concordia is to experience consistent pastoral tenure, an increasingly involved laity, statistical increase and an enthusiasm for growth and change. This period is written in both the excitement and the pain which growth and change necessarily produce.



Concordia Elementary School



Concordia High School

With the "War to End All Wars" in the past, the national and local economy begin to flourish and this growth is abundantly evident in the congregation. The small reed organ which has served the congregation since its 1897 move into the new sanctuary is replaced with a nine-rank tracker action organ built by Shipman and Barckhoff of Basic (Waynesboro), Virginia at a cost of \$3,410.05. The dedication recital by Mr. Martin Lochner of Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois, signals a new day for the congregation's celebration of its Lutheran liturgical and choral heritage.

Mr. F. W. (Beck) Moehlmann, organist at Concordia for more than a generation, recalls his boyhood impression of that festive day: "At the conclusion of the recital, Mr. Lochner slid from the organ bench and invited the congregation to request selections. Mr. C. R. Brady requested the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. When Mr. Lochner turned around, slid back on the organ bench and played it from memory, I was amazed. After the recital, my mother lamented to Mr. Lochner the fact that it was unbearably hot in the church and expressed her concern to him that a recital had to be given under these conditions. He responded by saying that he didn't mind the heat but would have preferred a better instrument."

The installation of the new organ encouraged the pur-

chase of a new altar, a new pulpit and other chancel furnishings complementing the design of the organ at a cost of approximately \$3,000. These furnishings serve us today in our chapel.

The concerns and activities of the congregation are, however, not merely parochial. A flurry of local activity surrounded a campaign to aid the Lutheran Laymen's League in raising \$3,000,000 for a Synodical endowment fund which would, in the words of the congregational minutes, "support incapacitated and disabled pastors and their widows and orphans". The minutes recall the enthusiasm of the drive; "every man, woman and child in the congregation was canvassed... And a follow-up campaign was begun to raise an additional sum toward the Synodical goal."

Concordia, experiencing the excitement of its own identity and importance as a congregation, presented several resolutions to the 1919 Convention of the English District of the Lutheran Church of Missouri, Ohio and other states. One of these resolutions suggested the creation of a new regional identity, a "Southern District".

This "reaching out" was most natural for the congregation at this time as Concordia together with other area churches hosted the English District Convention in the summer of the year.



English District Convention at Concordia, 1919



Concordia Dining Hall



Looking North toward campus

An English District Convention was quite unlike other conventions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The English District was a non-geographical district and although the majority of the congregations represented were mid-western with only a scattering of representation west of the Mississippi, the convention brought together pastoral and lay delegates from literally all over the nation.

Mrs. G. E. Moehlmann writes to her son, Walter, August 4, 1919, providing us not only a first hand view of the convention but also an insight into the experience and a slice of the excitement that the event created in the area: "The week before Synod it was very hot up to 98 degrees in the shade. Then we had a good shower and it cooled off considerably. It started to rain again and did not stop until a week later. It made it so difficult in many respects, for some of the guests were quartered at Newton, others in the country and all had to be taken back and forth. The noon meal was served at the college chapel. We seated and fed from 125 to 135 people at the first table. All were seated and had plate, cup, saucer, knife and glass. The lunches were brought each day by a different congregation. Concordia served first on Wednesday. The families that had no guests looked out for the first dinner. It was a bountiful dinner and so were all the others, chicken and good meats galore, cake, pies, pickles. The farmers had the greatest time bringing their baskets and boxes, for it rained and rained. During the day it would quit awhile, but some nights it would rain and pour continually. The roads must have been fearful. The Sunday dinner was to be served outside, but no, it rained and everybody got into the chapel. They were packed like sardines. This day they used no dishes, there would have been no room for them on the table. No coffee was served, but you should have seen the hall after dinner. One could have slid on custards, chicken bones and pickles. Everything worked in good harmony though. There were young boys that helped with the sweeping, making hot water or carrying it from the neighborhood, young girls that washed dishes and waited on tables. The coffee was cooked in two big percolators and partly on our old oil stove in the library. Dishes were washed there also. On Sunday there were two services and after that speeches out of doors by distinguished men. President Kreinheder, Oscar of St. Paul, Rev. or Prof. Romoser who visited with his wife and Harold during a few days of the Synod. They were on their way home from Carl's wedding at St. Charles, Mo. That is Mrs. Romoser's home. Mrs. Romoser told me Norman and George were stewards at the college (Bronxville) during their absence. Norman did the cooking for themselves and the ones that work there. Our guests were the Rev. Haertel and the Rev. Shuessler of Chicago, very fine congenial men. They were not at home often in the evenings. They had to go to committee meetings. One evening Rev. Czamanske from Sheboygan came over. He was with the Kreinheders,

and one evening Geo. Luecke played a game or more of Rook. Being at the college from eight in the morning until four or five in the afternoon got me good and tired. I let others do the entertaining. But I am glad to say that I got over the strain alright."

The following years were filled with continuing bursts of congregational action. Specific goals were recommended for giving per communicant member in the year 1920. The Church Council recommended: "First, that each communicant member be pledged to give \$1 during the year for missions; Second, that each communicant member be pledged to give \$1.15 for Synodical purposes.



Mrs. G. E. Moehlmann

The Voters' Assembly continued to grow: "Mr. Walter Matthews was received as member and voting member of the congregation... The building grew as two new rooms were added to the rear of the sanctuary... A new roof was placed and necessary renovations and redecoration of the interior was completed... A budget system was established to aid the congregation's Finance Committee... A new parochial teacher was called at a salary of \$720 per year... Lenten services were held on Sunday evenings instead of Wednesdays... Mr Claude



Old Concordia Parsonage

Schell was elected Sunday School Superintendent...Miss Olive Brady was elected organist... 'The Cemetery and Auditing Committee', Mr. C. R. Brady and Mr. P. E. Yount, are very enthusiastic in their endeavors...The congregation authorized "the necessary arrangements with regard to outhouses in order to comply with the State laws on sanitation"...The congregation granted the young people of Concordia the "privilege of organizing and conducting a Walther League within the congregation."

In 1921 with a total budget of \$3,000, the congregation voted to erect a garage at the parsonage and enlarge the parsonage with the addition of another story.

The parsonage, its occupants and environs were the subject of continuing interest, both official and unofficial, on the part of the congregation. Many remember that "Pastor Mennen had one of the biggest and best gardens in the county" and again Beck Moehlmann remembers, "Rev. Mennen had a cow and many times in walking the 200 yards from my home to the school or while playing in the area in the afternoon, I saw him milking his cow. I was impressed with the fact that this large man while seated milking was still taller than the cow. Many times I would see Rev. Mennen leading his cows home after they had been staked out during the day with a chain for grazing." What is unstated here but remembered by many was the fact that the milking was done most often in white shirt and tie.

Pastor Mennen was able to report in 1923: "Concordia has increased its membership by twenty-five...on Palm Sunday, twelve were confirmed...The Sunday previous nine adults were received by Confirmation and one by Baptism...Our Parochial School will close this session upon the completion of a very successful year...Our Professor Timm has discharged his duties with commendable faithfulness...The Sunday School is growing with a division of Bible classes into Senior and Junior groups."



The Rev. G. E. Mennen



Concordia Elementary School Class

Top Row: Rena Spencer, Landen Isenhower, Marshall Simmons, Ethel Hughey, Edwin Coyner, Henry Coleman, MacDewey Hunsucker, Henry Smith, Gus Little; 2nd Row: Charles Lail, Charlotte Coyner, John Lowe Isenhower, Olive Wagner, Thomas Coleman, Pat Wagner, Gertrude Spencer, Harlan Spencer, Buford Herman, Nora Bell Simmons; 3rd Row: Hugh D. Smith, Earl Herman, Berman Smith, Harold Coyner, Harry Lee Hunsucker, Teacher - Walter Timm, Ruth Willis, Forest Baker, Paul Little, Johnny Coleman, Ray Simmons; 4th Row: Mary Mennen, Helen Herman, Gerhardt Wagner, Sinclair Deal, Helen Schell, Willie Schell, Frank Spencer, Gertrude Herman, Buford Spencer, Frank Simmons, Grace Hunsucker?; 5th Row: Sue Betty Spencer, Lois Kreinheder, Charles Deal, Carl Spencer, Essie Little, Vivian Baker, George Mennen, Ruth Moehlmann Lineberger.

New beginnings too could be seen on the college campus. The long talked about girls dormitory was proposed once again and to the joy of all and the surprise of some, the new building was dedicated on August 20th of that same year. A special Concordia College Committee, made up of members of several area congregations, was encouraged in October to "dig a well and place a pump in it to complete the water system for the dormitory." College diplomas for the Bachelor of Literature degree were awarded in the Spring of that year to Margaret Moehlmann, Elise Rice and Lula Brady and the Bachelor of Arts degree to W. J. Barker.

A reading of the congregational minutes for the next decade soon indicates a continuing growth in membership and the struggle with facilities and finances that such growth always brings. The budget for the year 1923 indicates an offering of \$3,027.89 for home purposes, \$1,211.37 for Synodical purposes and an additional offering of \$3,168 toward the new girls dormitory. In that year Pastor Mennen's salary was raised to \$1,500 per year,

roughly half of the home purposes budget and a special sum was allocated to install screens on the parsonage windows. Permission was also granted for the pastor to install plumbing and water in the parsonage.

By 1925 the growth of the congregation and school required that the entire auditorium be used exclusively for worship and assembly purposes. A committee of Messrs. J. A. Isenhower, Junius Yount, O. W. Bolick, Alvin Bolick and Hubert Coyner led the congregation in the \$10,000 renovation and construction project.

The completed building for the school included two classrooms and a basement. The removal of a rear wall at the back of the church, the addition of new pews and further renovation established the interior of the sanctuary until its conversion into a gymnasium in 1958.

The debt on this renovation was not retired for a decade and was finally paid only through the continuing renewal of the loan and gifts of the interest on the loan back to the church by one of the members, Mr. G. E. Moehlmann.

The difficulty of meeting financial demands is dramatized by two entries into the 1925 minutes. The first resolution that opened the fiscal year reads in part, "owing to the fact that our congregation failed to meet the requirements of our budget for 1924, we are forced to enter the year of 1925 with a deficit of \$800; and owing to the fact that our subscriptions so far for this year are practically the same as last year and your Council does not feel encouraged in any way to arrange a budget, carry on our church work for the year, unless the congregation in some way will help to increase the congregation's income for the necessary expenses, — be it resolved that the above be submitted to the congregation for their consideration before the Council arranges a budget for this year."

The second entry in December of the year indicates the seriousness and ingenuity of the congregation in meeting its commitments. "... On Motion it was ordered that a list of the amount pledged by each member be published after the Church Council makes another complete canvass to secure pledges from all those that have so far failed to send in their pledges — Also that this list is to show the amount expected from those that failed to make pledges — Also another list be published at the end of 1926 to show the amount paid in by each member."

The years saw the congregation and its Voters Assembly wrestling with matters of great significance and interesting trivia. The congregation petitioned Synod to re-establish the school as a junior college. The Christmas Day services were established at 6:00 a.m. The loose offering for the day was to be given to any seminary student who conducted services (a resolution that was rescinded in 1934.)

Lenten services were switched with great regularity between Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings. In an attempt to encourage participation at the quarterly Voters Assembly, attendance figures and the names of those in attendance was to be published in the Annual Report. In 1927, Concordia established a new office, that of Congregational President, and elected C. S. Coyner, who was forced to resign due to ill health after only a few months of service. He was replaced by Hubert Coyner.

Concordia was fifty years old in 1928 and September 9th was designated as the official day of celebration with all arrangements to be made by Pastor Mennen. Dr. W. H. T. Dau, first Missouri Synod pastor of Concordia, was invited to the anniversary celebration and the Voters Assembly approved a recommendation from the Church Council, "that we make a special effort to pay off our indebtedness in our Fiftieth Anniversary year."

A Finance Committee came into existence in the same year and, "the duty of this committee would be to send out quarterly statements and to assist the Church Council with the finances as best they see fit." A regular quarterly meeting in 1929 had to be rescheduled as no one came. A later meeting of that year ordered that no one was to be released from his pledge unless he person-

ally came before the congregational meeting and was formally released from this responsibility. (The penalty for a failure to live up to this Voters' Assembly resolution remains happily unclear.)



The First Bank of Conover, The Citizen's Bank, located on Main Street.



The Coyner Family: Front to rear—Gertrude, Myrtle, Sophie, Mrs. Casper Coyner; Standing—Casper S. Coyner; Seated—Mr. Coyner's mother and father.

A special meeting in July of 1929 was called to debate the continuation of the parochial school and "after much discussion, the vote was made by ballot which resulted as follows — 22 votes for the school and 6 against." Teacher C. A. Kurth offered his resignation at this meeting and his resignation was accepted.

A special concern regarding dignity and order in worship was expressed in 1931 and "after some discussion, it was decided to try and get the people to sit far up front in the church. The Chairman and ushers to work out the problems and to use means as necessary." (Here, as in the case of the pledges, the "means" are left to the reader's imagination.) The concern for discipline and orderly worship was addressed several other times with special reference made to youth who were discovered absent at critical moments in the liturgy. Private concern for worship practice was not limited to the youth however. Many members recall the tradition in Communion distribution which invited by Confirmation classes first, the men to the Sacrament and then the women. The origins of this practice are cloudy. But quite vivid in the memory of many were the bits of tobacco (presumably left by the men) which floated like ceremonial pollution in the chalice. The days of the common cup were definitely numbered by this memory.

Again in 1931, the minutes record, "Meeting opened with prayer by the Pastor. On account of a very small attendance, a motion was made and carried that the meeting be postponed. On motion the following resolution was passed. 'We, a few of the voting members of this congregation, regret that not more of our brethren were present at the congregational meeting Sunday afternoon and we hope that they will not fail in their duty along this line next Tuesday night.' "

A period which began with new beginnings was about to end with sad "informal" endings and once again the people of Concordia would experience the deepest reality of the Christian Faith; "we are saved by

grace."

The future of the school which had been debated for a number of years was dealt a blow when the school was forced to cut back to only four grades in 1932. The Great Depression had worked its way South and the area was feeling the full burden of unemployment, low wages and poor sales. Adequate teacher salaries were difficult to sustain, the pastor's salary had been cut back and these together with other factors caused the congregation not so much to close the school as to gradually allow it to fade out of existence.

Mr. Carl Rullman, a highly respected young graduate of Concordia, River Forest, Ill., became the last Called teacher of a school which had come into existence even before the congregation. Pastor Mennen was given a salary increase and responsibility for the eighteen pupils in the four grades. Although the congregational minutes are mysteriously silent here, it is known that the continued life of the school was very heatedly debated and the decision hardly pleasing to everyone. The minutes do record a request by the pastor in 1934 to create an alternative religious education opportunity for the children through the vehicle of a special summer school for religious instruction. This school was conducted in the month of July by the pastor with the assistance of four other teachers. In July of the following year, 1935, the minutes record, "A motion was made and carried that we postpone the day school for this year due to the Infantile Paralysis epidemic."

This "postponement" of the school would have been under ordinary circumstances a most painful moment in the congregation's life. However, other events dramatic and tragic now overshadowed the quiet death of the Christian Day School which had been for sixty years such a vital dimension of Christian education for the congregation and community. As one school was dying quietly, another died violently!



Chapter X



“According to Synod’s Rules on Foot Ball...”

"Hear the sledges with the bells, —
silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

Oh from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells!

On the future! How it tells
to the swinging and the ringing
of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
bells, bells, bells, —
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

Edgar Allen Poe

(from *The Carillon*, Volume II, 1930. A Yearbook edited by the "Concordian" Staff and students of Concordia College, Conover, N. C.)

The twin bells of college and church had filled the air with "rhyming and chiming" for almost 40 years. Together the bells had marked the ancient hours of worship and study, summoned to Sacrament and funeral, reminded of freedom and duty, echoed earth's care and heaven's promise. The older of the two bells presided over affairs at the college from an increasingly precarious perch. The Administration building which is now 57 years old in 1935, groans beneath its great iron load. The future of the bell is threatened by more than a tired building. The very existence of the college makes tomorrow's sound uncertain. The college enrollment which had once reached more than ninety students now numbers less than twenty-five. The Depression so visibly represented in building and enrollment clouds the energies and morale of the faculty as well. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." This passage from the Proverbs is often quoted with reference to the college by its feisty President, the Rev. H. B. Hemmeter. The words are inscribed on at least one petition to a Syn-

odical Convention requesting funds for new buildings. One can imagine the fantasies swirling in the rotund little scholar's head as he views with dismay the condition of the building. Is this not the man who had physically attacked and destroyed the delapidated fence twenty years earlier? "Perhaps a Teddy Roosevelt style charge on the aged walls!... Up San Juan Hill!... Through the Library!... Across to the Assembly Hall!... Surround the Classrooms!...

It is not that Synod has not heard or heeded Concordia and Conover's pleas. It has. Requests for funds were made as early as 1914. The old Administration Building is the college's primary building and its state of age and disrepair are a source of embarrassment, frustration and some times strained relations between the College supporters and Synod. Continued requests for funds are met again and again with promises, "as soon as the funds become available." The good intentions of the Synod and the hopes of the college and community lead to the securing of an architect and an eighteen month flurry of activity with a Charlotte firm. Final drawings are submitted to Synod and in 1926, an appropriation of \$95,000 is voted by the triennial convention. The economic realities of the Depression and local circumstances however, prevent any building beyond the blueprint stage. No money is ever given and the only fruit of this labor is a legal entanglement with the architect. Synod's strong, single-minded support for schools which will produce men for the pastoral ministry is itself somewhat shaken by a sudden oversupply of young men in the late "twenties" and early "thirties". Many churches simply cannot afford a shepherd of their own and tight money makes new mission starts slow and difficult. This new dilemma coupled with the old conflict of goals between the parent body's desire for pastors and the local community's desire for a quality, parochial, co-educational institution is never resolved.





The unkept promises of Synod create increasingly serious morale problems within the faculty and board. The resignation in 1928, of President Kreinheder to accept a call to parish ministry and the subsequent resignation of Professor Martin Coyner after almost fifteen years at Concordia mean that the college will be served for an entire school term by four "supply professors" and an acting president. The school is literally without a permanent faculty.

Not even a "mass assembly" of area laymen and a 1929 "Laymen's Resolution Urging the Necessity of New Buildings for Concordia College, Conover, N. C." to Synod with all the appropriate "whereas's" and "be it resolved's" can change the German script on the wall. Only one thing is certain in the years 1919-1935... the future of Concordia is very uncertain.

It does not seem that the anxieties which gnaw at the faculty, the Board of Trustees and other college supporters affect the spirit or the hope of Concordia's students. If touched by the uncertainty of the times the student body apparently remains quite unaffected by it. Concerns center on the number of graduate "essays" the students will have to endure graduation day rather than on the number of students actually enrolled and paying sorely needed tuition. Witness the student's summary of the class of 1930 in the Carillon of that year:

"The Class of '30 has an extremely checkered and varied career. It has been increased and decreased so often that it has always been a matter of great speculation as to just who would graduate this year and comprise the noble class of 1930. For a time there were eleven of us, but other diversions claimed three of the girls and two of the boys, so that June 1929, found the class dwindled to six. However with the opening of school in September 1929, the fair sex was entirely missing, and it was feared that graduation would be lacking the "gentle quantity".



Mary and Ruth

Two girls somehow deemed it requisite to the success of the class to return and by the middle of the first term the class again regained the number of six, and two essays (how boring!) were added to the commencement program.



Student Burandt

Our class will undoubtedly be widely separated after graduation, some going on to St. Louis, some going out into the business world, and some following other trails; but it is to be desired that the feeling of fellowship, of friendship and the spirit of co-operation will not fade, but live on and grow in the happy recollections of events



Girl's Dormitory, 1920



Henry Hemmeter, Bill Nehrenz, Fred Graef

and associations connected with Concordia. We have tried our utmost to follow the splendid example and to attain the high standing of our predecessors and we hope that the memories which we leave with our fellow-students are as pleasant as those which we take away with us."

Life on campus is homespun and pleasant, simple and by contemporary standards serene. Picture yourself strolling on a warm fall afternoon beneath the campus oaks. Before you is the main entrance to the "Ad" building. It is within this imposing old wooden structure that all formal classes are conducted and the five thousand volume Library is housed. Up the steps and into the cupola students have climbed each winter to catch the first glimpse of snow on the North Carolina mountains to the North and West. Only a few steps south will lead

you into the small, two-story Boys Dormitory, simple and austere. The Girls Dormitory is a "safe" fifty yard distance Northeast of the larger building. Here you can always look forward to homecooked meals with fresh bread and if you are a piano student you will make use of the music room. When it is erected in 1920, the Girls Dormitory represents more than just another building, for this year the co-eds outnumber the boys thirty to twenty-eight. Few girls however, come from a distance further than Claremont (about four miles) whereas male students journey to this "little burg" as Dr. Yoder once described it, from all over the Eastern United States. Pastor George Mennen Jr., son of the man who served Concordia as pastor for a quarter century and himself a student and graduate of Concordia remembers these "students coming from the North". "They are looked upon with great awe and wonderment; almost as if they have come from another country." Another student remembers that the arrival by train of one of these boys from the North is marked by the distinct aroma of coal dust hovering in dormitory halls.

One of these victims of coal dust syndrome, the Rev. Fred Graef, a student from New York State, eagerly anticipated his first glimpse of the cotton fields for which the South was famous. He recalls his disappointment when he was directed not toward endless, green, waving fields of the "king", but rather to long rows of scrubby brown bushes and the first humble indications of factories rising from the red earth fields; factories which were later to become part of a Southern furniture empire. Any such disappointments are short-lived. The church and community immediately adopt these men from another country and their classmates. Feelings of

homesickness are buried beneath double-dips of ice cream offered with a shy smile by southern belles at the congregation's "Welcome to Concordia" social. The world may be different beneath the soft glow of the Japanese lanterns twisting slowly in the warm night air, but there is a definite feeling of being near home.

The church quickly becomes the center of social activity. Singing in the congregational choir exempts one from a Thursday evening study period and the church boasts one of the finest choirs in the area. The "Harvest Home" festival in late Fall gives each student an opportunity to travel throughout the area with horse/wagon or truck gathering gifts to the college from field, garden and kitchen. The treasures are hauled, dragged, stacked, arranged and finally displayed at the altar for the following Sunday. Harvest Home catches the sharp frost of Fall and warms with the promise of food that will feed the college another term.

The term "college" is in some ways a misnomer, for the course of study is primarily the four years of high school. The two years of college have never been consistently offered at the school and although they offered a good classical education never are these offerings recognized or accredited by the State Department of Education. The High School itself is finally accredited only in 1928 — fifty years after the doors are first opened.

At the same time as the culture, climate and church lifestyle are forming a student in the South, the ministerial students are preparing to enter a very different setting in the North upon graduation from Concordia. At the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, the classes are in German and preparation is for a ministry to and for German speaking congregations which retain much of the language, culture and traditions of the old country.



Front to Rear: Lula Barker, Henrietta Moehlmann, Ruth Moehlmann, Walter Brady, Dick Lineberger.

The college is unique and independent throughout the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in its singular use of the English language, as well as in its southern flavor and close ties with the local community. This precious and precocious little school is "livermush and grits" in a system more inclined to "kraut and wurst".



Concordia College Choir



Hemmeter, Summers



*Mennen,
Lindemeyer*



Smith, Schaff

There is a special closeness existing in this small school between students and faculty. This closeness includes not only individual attention in studies, but a nightly visit from the professor assigned this duty and if you are a Greek student you may well find yourself in a class of one. The relationship with the faculty is an interesting combination of awe at the learning and discipline of these men, almost all of whom are ordained pastors with teaching responsibilities and amusement at their somewhat pompous manner and sometimes flawed dignity. The stories about professors quickly become legend and are passed down from year to year. Stories of the jacked-up rear wheels on C. O. Smith's car and of the mysterious fire lighted beneath it. Stories of the day Professor Fredericks threw himself, as was his

practice, at the bell rope to signal the end of class and of his marvelous crash to the floor as he discovered — too late — that the bell rope had been slashed. Stories of the anonymous professor who allowed his students to "light up" in class, " 'til the smoke was so thick you could cut it with a knife."

Discipline is strict, but not nearly as strict as it had been a generation before. The faculty minutes of 1905 record the discipline of two young ladies. The first was brought before the faculty on charges of reading a newspaper during recitation. She expressed her sorrow for her action and promised not to do it again. The second young lady was "brought before the faculty for having encouraged and abetted the actions of a young man by inviting him to her father's house and by accompanying him to church." The faculty was evidently satisfied by her statement that she meant no harm by her behavior, was convinced of the gravity of her transgression and was truly sorry for it. She was, however, required to make a public apology before the school and placed on probation.

As Concordia experienced the fallout from the "Roaring Twenties" faculty minutes devote much less concern to disciplinary problems. Although the discipline remained, the advent of good roads, automobiles and other intrusions of a modern era begin to soften a somewhat brittle strictness. The Board of Trustees received a petition from the 1922-23 Student Body asking "pardon for their actions and the promise of cooperation in the future". The exact nature of the rebellion is not recorded. Again in April of 1925, the Board is called to "deal with a case of discipline, a difficulty arising between two male students". The Board resolves, "to recommend to the faculty that it give nine demerits to the one student and twelve demerits to the other for the offense". The Board also expresses "regret about this affair and trusts that what is decided in this matter will meet with approval of all concerned, with good will to all for the good of the boys and for the benefit of the school". This is of only passing importance to us but to the boys who got into the fist fight the decision was momentous. Fifteen demerits mean automatic expulsion!



Girl's Dorm and Residents

Academic freedom is virtually unknown, but the times and circumstances emancipate the student body to the point of presenting a petition to the faculty requesting that certain study periods be suspended in order to provide opportunity for the development of a better athletic program. Although the Board of Trustees turns down the students' request, the student body's point is eventually made, for during this decade an intercollegiate sports program is developed. Baseball and Basketball are the only sports that become firmly established although permission for a Football team is given with some obvious institutional reservations: "resolved that we add Foot Ball (sic) to our Athletics next term with the understanding that the faculty see that it is safe guarded and carried out *according to Synod's Rules on Foot Ball*. May, 1927."



Concordia "Blue Jay"

Football will never make a "first and ten" at Concordia, but the College "Blue Jays" take to the diamond and court in a rather successful sports program with teams from the area. The teams are made up of students at all levels, both college and high school and coached by pros like the Rev. J. L. Summers. One of the most colorful and beloved campus figures was Coach Q. O. "Dad" Spencer. The college yearbook remembers, "Concordia needed a man who would give his time and attention to its development of a baseball team. "Dad" proved to be the right man. He never gets tired of practicing, even his 'boys' are yelling for a rest" ... "Dad" gives his time for the benefit of the team free of charge. Besides being coach for Concordia, Dad fills the office of 'nacht waechter' for the Town of Conover. So you see 'Dad' is a busy man, looking out for his town and also watching out for his team."

The Sports program adds a great deal to college social life which for a small school in a small town within a somewhat austere context is amazingly full. Choir, athletics, Walther League, the Senior Class Play, church so-



Margaret Moehlmann, Graduation Day

cials and festivals, the literary society — Eurythmian Bon Verba, a school newspaper — "The Concordian", *The Carillon*, graduation preparation with its visiting dignitaries and essays — together these activities offer both a challenge to studies and a necessary enrichment of what could have been a rather restrictive classical education. For many male students the real social center is off campus — North on Main Street is Ed Herman's store —



Dad Spencer

a combination country store, cultural center and credit bureau. Here a student can "put it on the tab" by inscribing his name on the wall (a kind of status symbol) and posting the amount due. Here too, one can exchange local news and views while watching with fascination the proprietor — a colorful man with perpetually dirty hands — move from pouring out measured amounts of kerosene to fishing pickles out of the huge barrel to digging up with still unwashed hands a nickel's worth of hard candy. This informal social center is a place where conversation may be abruptly stopped and attention given to "chasing the rats out of the crackers and the cat off the cheese."

The bells of church and college call out to each other across the years, across the gradually changing landscape across the always changing face of the ever young student body. Now "rhyming and chiming" they command to the holiest of hours. It is Palm Sunday, 1935, and beneath the great bell of the church youth rise in excitement from the charge of their Confirmation vows. Across the dirt road bordering the campus the refrain is chanted by the college bell. It is almost Easter! It is Spring! It is time for young spirits to follow the leading of the heart. It is time for the tentative touch of finger tips as young couples walk slowly beneath the fiery green of campus oaks in Spring. It is time for graduation and goodbyes. It is a moment for tears and new beginnings.



Ed Herman's Store. Present site of First Federal Savings and Loan.



Will Smith



G. Mennen



Elizabeth Carpenter



Vivian Baker



P. Yount

It is Tuesday of Holy Week, April 16. A brisk wind left over from March stirs the dogwoods and whips through the steeple as Will, the black janitor, and his young son make their way through the pre-dawn darkness lighting the fires in the classroom stoves. There has been a dry spell and the warmth of the stoves will help drive the reluctant edges of winter from the old building's corners.

Professor Lindemeyer somewhat preoccupied with the heaviness of the Week, the day's lessons and a vacation only two days away is walking, milk bucket in hand, to his early morning chores. "Doray! Doray!" The words whipped by the wind catch the professor's ear, shatter his preoccupations and hurl his senses headlong toward the campus where Will is frantically calling his son. "Doray! Doray!" His ears hear the words, but his eyes are stopped at the bell where thin slices of flame are cutting away at the dead straw of sparrows' nests and the brittle wood of the cupola. THE COLLEGE IS ON FIRE! Dropping the bucket he runs across the street. "Doray! Doray!" The boy has run to his father's trembling side. The boys dormitory torn from sleep spills students from its doorway. "Call the Fire Department!" "Get Water!" "Find buckets, wash basins, anything that can hold water!" "Hurry!" "Get the stuff out... Anything!" John Y. Little and others struggle with the huge piano. Somehow they get it out. Back for the books! Old books! Valuable books! A few volumes are wrestled from the smoke-filled Library.

The Conover Volunteers are here! "Stand back!" The water streams toward the building but falls far short of the roof which is now completely ablaze. The Hickory Fire Fighters arrive, but the weapons they marshal against this enemy are too little and too late. The firemen from Conover and Hickory direct their attention to saving the surrounding buildings and the small fires which the wind-driven sparks ignite. Suddenly above the moaning of the large crowd, above the soft weeping of some, above the spit commands of the leaders, an awful, tearing sound is heard through and within the roar of the flames. The great bell lurches forward on its axis, pauses, then disappears, exploding through the burning timbers and crashing to the earth in an eruption of splinter, spark and flame. There is one, final, mournful clang! Then silence...



M. L. Little



V. L. Bolick



A vintage black and white photograph of four men standing outdoors in front of trees. From left to right: a man in a light suit and tie, a man in a dark suit and tie, a man in a dark suit and bow tie, and a man in a light suit and bow tie. The man in the dark suit and bow tie has his arm around the man in the light suit and bow tie.

Grad Class, 1926

(from *The Carillon*, Volume II, 1930. A Yearbook edited by the "Concordian" Staff and students of Concordia College, Conover, N. C.)

For forty years the bells of church and college have called to each other. Tonight in vain the great iron will sing to its brother.

Chapter XI



Concordia has been at its best a congregation of the "Laos tou Theou"— the "People of God".

Concordia is Dead! Long live Concordia!

The most intense emotional anguish we experience as humans is the *death* of a loved one. Our generation has seen an almost obsessive study of the dynamics of death. We have examined the emotional world of the terminally ill, analyzed the parallel trauma of the family, probed the experience of those who "return" after a diagnosis of clinical death and catalogued the stages of grief through which this greatest of all losses mercilessly drags us.

The long term value and reliability of this "new wisdom" has yet to be determined, but our search has cast some light on the darkest of human experiences. Denial, isolation, anger, withdrawal, bargaining — these and other grief experiences can be observed forming the personality of the Concordia which emerges from the struggles and deaths in its family. Mrs. J. A. Isenhower, writing for the Observer News Enterprise, April 1952, observes, "When a town or community loses a College, especially an institution of Christian education, that loss is felt through all the years ahead, as has been the circumstance here with the loss of Concordia College, destroyed by fire seventeen years ago." Again in the preparation of this history Mrs. Walter (Charlotte) Brady remembers, "When Concordia College died in that great early morning fire, it seemed that an old friend was lost and the whole community was in a state of melancholy."

Yet, inexplicably, there is *not a word* in the congregational minutes concerning the college, its loss, its meaning or future plans for over ten years. It is as if the pain is too great and the loss easier to ignore or deny than face. Nor is this congregational "denial" the only corporate

grief dynamic. As a congregation Concordia was almost synonymous with the larger community, but now it seems to withdraw for a period and turn in on itself. The many ways in which college, school, community and church were interrelated and interacted are now limited and these limitations are allowed to stand virtually unchallenged. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as parent body reinforces this close attitude with its own unique blend of cultural peculiarity, confessional identity and dogmatic purity. Together these forces converge to form a theologically sound, confessionally strong, but socially isolated congregational lifestyle.

The one dynamic in grief which the behavioral sciences can neither analyze nor adequately factor is the grief shattering event of the Resurrection. The Master's victory over death does not so much change grief as transcend it. Easter does not end grief but rather makes this awful experience bearable and redemptive. The depths of Holy Week so painfully experienced in the 1935 fire opened again on the Easter proclamation, "He is Risen!" and a people made new by Good Friday's memory and Easter's hope began to sift through the ashes for precious memories and retrieve the hopes which had sustained and encouraged before. Nothing could destroy the deep friendships, the many marriages, the quality educations, the Synodical loyalties and the geographical significance created between the two Concordias. The congregation is now called to be a faithful heir to this spiritual treasure. The congregation does what one must do in grief — accept the realities with grace and with the courage born of hope — get on with the necessary business of living!



Looking North, Main Street

The church, dormitories and homes become classrooms — graduation exercises are celebrated with two pastors and former graduates, F. A. Freed and W. P. Hunsucker, presiding in the service for the five high school and two college graduates. — Dr. Hemmeter and the Concordia Choir are guests at Newton High School's "Closing Exercises" — The festivals of Reformation, Missions, Harvest Home, and Thanksgiving make hope not simply possible but inevitable. — Christmas is celebrated with a cantata, "The Christmas King", sung by an approximately fifty-voice choir now made up entirely of congregational members. — Professors are called to new assignments — Attention is given to liturgy as the Preparatory Service before The Communion is removed — The note of long-standing on the building is burned as the debt is finally paid. Life at Concordia continues not simply as survival, but as Victory!

The "New Deal" now captures the attention of an economically troubled and tired nation. A "new deal" of another sort is also being pursued by area Synodical congregations in the formation of a new District of Synod locally organized and locally responsible. Like its economic counterpart on the national scene, a new District would be able to focus and funnel monies and more particularly energies and manpower to promising mission areas in the South Atlantic States. The college had been such a center during much of its history. In the earlier years of Synod's presence it had become a rallying point for strict Confessionally Lutheran Churches. In later years professors and pastors associated with the college had served as missionaries throughout the Carolinas. New congregations and preaching stations were created and served through the efforts of the college in Conover, Newton, Catawba, Hickory, Taylorsville, Asheville, Claremont and many other locations. The college community had thus become quite naturally a center for the creation of a new District "closer to home" with all the advantages such a local juridical unit would provide.

In the same year as Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated for his first term, Dr. Hemmeter and others provided the spirit and drive for the "new deal" in the Carolinas and Virginia. The 1933 request was granted by the English District in that year but denied by Synod two years later in the same convention that formally ended Concordia College. It was felt at that time that these States did not have enough congregations to sustain a new District. If this was discouraging to some, the efforts which continued lost no enthusiasm. Gathering interest in congregations from South Carolina to Delaware, a second petition was presented in 1938 and this time received a Synodical blessing. July 28, 1939, the organizing date for the "Southeastern" District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, was a marker event for the new little District. This date and event may have been even more important for the people of Concordia. The congregation was host to this founding convention and thus

maintained its position of responsibility and leadership in the Southeast in spite of its relatively new role as "merely a congregation" in "that little burg."

Two hundred persons gathered for the organizational banquet at the Newton American Legion building. Apparently no one "slid on the pickles" as they may have at the Convention banquet twenty years earlier, but an event at least as festive and colorful was celebrated. Pastor Walter G. Schwehn presented a gavel made of wood from the old log cabin seminary in Perry County, Missouri, to the newly elected President, the Rev. J. George Spilman. (Perry County is the site of the Saxon settlement on the banks of the Mississippi River South of St. Louis, which gave birth to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It is understood locally to be the "Catawba County of the North".) Other first officers were the Revs. O. A. Sauer, 1st Vice-President; J. L. Summers, 2nd Vice-President; J. Frederick Wenchel, Secretary and Mr. A. H. Herrmann, Treasurer. Almost fifty years of spiritual nourishment and happy association with the English Synod and its successor, the English District, LC-MS, came to a close with the formal joining of the Southeastern District of the LC-MS.



North Carolina delegates to the founding convention of the Southeastern District, L.C.-M.S.

One man who was deeply involved in the formation of the new District, Dr. Leslie F. Frerking, speaks of its organization twenty-one years later at the fourteenth convention, meeting once again at Concordia: "We are



Delegates to the convening of the Southeastern District—The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, July 23-28, 1939

meeting on historic soil. Not only does it mark the site of the first convention of our District twenty-one years ago, but the inspiration for its organization was conceived on this very spot (the site of old Concordia College). It was Dr. H. B. Hemmeyer's dream that began to materialize in 1933 when the English District granted permission to its congregations in the Carolinas to petition the Synod for authority to organize a new District in the Southeast, in order to exploit the missionary opportunities in this rapidly developing section of the country. Synod in 1935 rejected the petition of the Carolina congregations, believing that there were too few congregations in the area for a vigorous District. In 1937 a commission for the organization of the S. E. District was resolved upon by representatives of four different Districts (Eastern, English, Southern and Western). A steering committee was appointed. It was composed of Pastors George Spilman, O. A. Sauer, R. S. Ressmeyer, James L. Summers, Leslie F. Frerking. It was later augmented by the appointment of seven laymen: A. H. Herrmann, Enno Knollman, Theodore Katenkamp, J. A. Isenhower, D. F. Cline, J. Henry Schmitt, and Fred Gast. By the time of the 1938 convention of Synod a total of 46 pastors and 57 congregations in Georgia, Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and District of Columbia had agreed to enter upon this challenging mission venture. And so Synod authorized the organization of the new District in the Southeast."

It is as if the energy depressed after the death of the college was suddenly released with the birth "on campus" of the new District, for the years 1939-1941 are filled with new activity. August of 1939 moved the Mennens into a handsome new brick parsonage of ten rooms and two baths. This spacious structure built at a cost of \$6000.00 replaced the parsonage built thirty-eight years earlier to serve as home for the pastor serving the Concordia-St. Johns parish. Of this earlier parsonage, church papers record that: "In 1901 an acre of ground south of the church was bought by the congregation for a parsonage lot for \$150.00. An eight-room house was erected on this lot at a cost of about \$1,100.00 and a stable for the pastor's horse for \$60.00. Arrangement was made that Concordia furnish the pastor a house to live in and that St. John's buy and feed the pastor's horse." Anne Huffman in the *Hickory Daily Record*

The Building Committee — O. W. Bolick, J. A. Isenhower, Hubert Coyner and J. A. Yount — wisely sold the old home which was moved to a new site one block south and became the Moser Apartments.

The mortar was hardly dry in the new parsonage when a steadily increasing Sunday School enrollment made necessary another building committee, more drawings and increased funding for the addition of sixteen Sunday School rooms and the remodeling of an old school classroom.



Parsonage Constructed in 1939

The year 1941 began with excitement as a congregational Lutheran Laymen's League was formed in January. The League immediately threw its energies into a mountain retreat and camping center for Lutherans purchased by area churches the previous summer. "Linn Haven" — a name suggested by Mrs. O. H. (Lucy) Isenhower a Concordia member, — began to serve as the focus for summer camp, recreation and retreat experiences throughout the Southeastern United States. The Concordia L.L.L. soon became a backbone of Camp Linn Haven and an energy source for many other congregational and community projects.

The historic introduction of "The Lutheran Hymnal", a hymn and worship resource for Missouri Synod congregations, into the life of Concordia just after Easter was exciting but at the same time met with mixed emotions. The "old green hymnal" as it had come to be known would be remembered, discussed and missed for a generation. In spite of the mixed reviews, *The Lutheran Hymnal* would give a common worship resource to the LC-MS for the first time in its 100 year history and provide a style of liturgy and a standard of hymnody which would serve Concordia and its sister churches throughout the Synod long and well.

With these giant strides into a new decade and a new era, Concordia seemed to be on the verge of breaking once again into a charge on future challenges and opportunities. But the last half of the year was to be written in as much sadness as the first had been inscribed with promise. Pastor Mennen was stricken with an incapacitating circulatory disease that left this strong man in much pain and incapable of the faithfulness that had marked 22 years of service to the congregation and church-at-large.

In September Concordia was deprived of yet another source of congregational strength, vision and faithfulness by the sudden death of J. A. Isenhower. Mr. Isenhower had ministered within the congregation as Elder, Secretary, President and on many committees. He had also served the wider church as a founding father of the new District and within his own community as Conover's Mayor. His death in 1941, while still a relatively young man, is noted here not simply because of who he was to the congregation but because of what he as a *lay person* represented within the congregation's history. As blessed as Concordia has been throughout its history with pastors of quality and commitment, it has been the lay leaders — many more than this history can record adequately or accurately — who have created a strong and dynamic ministry that has marked Concordia's style from its birth. From the Pinkney Spencers to names like Brady, Bolick, Coyner, Hunsucker, Schell, Wagner, Yount, the list continues and grows with each need, each challenge, each year. Living out the Reformation call to the "Priesthood of all Believers," Concordia has been at its best a congregation of the "Laos tou Theou" — the "People of God".



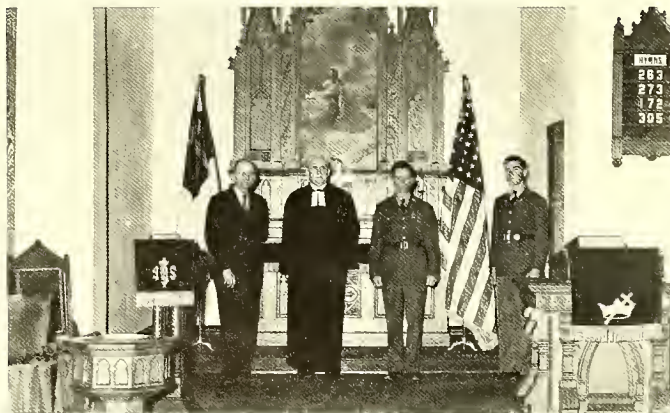
Arthur Wagner, Sexton to Concordia for a generation

The incapacity of one of its leaders and the death of another seemed to foreshadow the greater tragedy. Together with 90 million other Americans, Concordia sat transfixed by radios, almost hysterical with anger and disbelief, blurting out sketchy details of "the day of infamy" and the explosion of World War II. One by one Concordia said, "Goodbye! God keep you!" to its dearest and best. One by one the figures rose until the sons and daughters in military service numbered ninety-five, 20% of the congregation's total communicant membership; eighty-nine men, three daughters and three unique gifts to military service, Chaplains, the



Chaplain Fred Graef

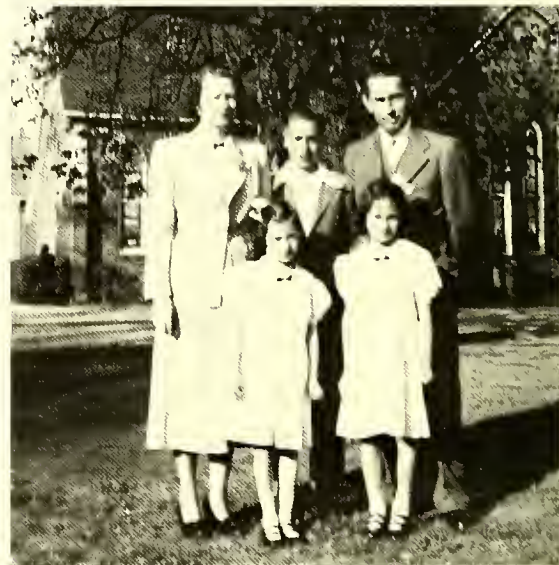
two sons and a son-in-law of the Mennens, all graduates of Concordia College. Sundays became a time for exchanging letters and news from distant places with unfamiliar sometimes unpronounceable names. Sunday was also always a time for the special prayers and the closing hymn, "God bless our Servicemen". The news was sometimes terribly bad. Five times Western Union called with news of Concordia's sons, "we regret to inform you..."



The news at home was news of difficulty and discomfort as well. Pastor Mennen's health continued to deteriorate until he was forced to resign in October of 1943, with official retirement beginning January 1, 1944; a pastorate of twenty-five years. Although he was able to give part time service, the congregation called upon the services of area Pastors J. L. Summers, Carl Koerber and C. Winfred Long who gave necessary care from 1941 to the end of 1943. Pastor Mennen delivered his last sermon

on July 25, 1943 and on Christmas Eve he gave a short address at the Children's Christmas Service.

A Call meeting is both an exciting and solemn time for a congregation; exciting because of the interest and plain curiosity, the anticipation and risk, the hopes and misgivings a congregation feels; solemn because of the common understanding that when human wisdom has made its best decision it is yet the Holy Spirit Who must transform the congregation's Call to a mere job into a Divine Call to a holy ministry. The congregation called the Rev. Richard F. Lineberger, a graduate of Concordia College and pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, New Orleans, La. Pastor Lineberger accepted Concordia's Call and was installed January 2, 1944. Pastor Lineberger like his predecessor was a man of great gifts and deep pastoral concern. Like the man he followed he was to enjoy a long and intensely fruitful ministry. And also like his predecessor, Pastor Lineberger was married to a daughter of the congregation, Ruth Moehlmann Lineberger, a gifted leader in her own right.



The Lineberger Family

The Sunday following the Installation the Rev. J. Franklin Yount of Akron, Ohio, a son of the congregation, graduate of Concordia and brother-in-law to Pastor Mennen preached an afternoon Anniversary sermon commemorating twenty-five years of service to the congregation by the Mennens. As Pastor Lineberger led the congregation in prayer there was abundant opportunity to say "Thank you" to God for one faithful pastor who was retiring and for another who was taking the prophet's mantle. In a chaotic, war-torn world a symbol of God's continuing peace was, in the presence of these two men, dramatically present.

The pastoral care and congregational support were going to be called upon to attend in the midst of yet another crisis. As a war raged thousands of miles away in lands unknown, a new menace was faced at home and battle lines were drawn against one of the most terrible

of epidemics, Infantile Paralysis, a merciless destroyer of the young. Catawba County became in 1944 a center for emergency care. The following are excerpts from a series of articles by Wake Bridges under the title of "The Miracle of Hickory" in the *Hickory Daily Record* May, 1975: "The year was 1944, and from June 12 to September 27, restrictions were placed on children under twelve years of age in public places and gatherings due to the polio epidemic. Visible effect on church attendance resulted. During this epidemic an emergency hospital was in operation in Hickory from June through the fifth of March. The second fatality there was a child of Concordia — Marion Glenn Spencer, age 2, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Glenn Spencer — July 4. (The child was a great grandson of the Pinkney Spencers who donated the land for the college.) The Catawba County Health Camp (called by many Fresh Air Camp) near Lake Hickory was the setting for this hospital, and the whole operation became known as "The Miracle of Hickory". From the time it opened in June until it ended on March 5, 1945, approximately four hundred people had been treated. The hospital had a remarkably low mortality rate, a little over three percent, which was a national record for an epidemic. On moving day (March 5, 1945) in a long caravan eighty-seven polio patients were transferred to Charlotte Memorial Hospital. The oldest patient was Ray Carter, age 27, of Mars Hill; the youngest was Sherwood Brown, age ten months, of Lillington. Seventy cars and a dozen ambulances made up the caravan. The patients were wrapped in warm blankets, and forty-eight nurses made the transfer.

Nationally, there were people here from CORONET and LIFE magazines and radio stations and newsreel organizations were here to cover the story. A special production prepared by a radio network and starring Greer Garson, dramatized the story of how polio was conquered by Hickory."

As Catawba County celebrated a victory in the continuing war with polio, 1945 witnessed world events shaping another victory for the entire nation. In August a special V-J Day Service gathered the people of Concordia for a thanksgiving to God. The war was over and Concordia's children could come home. If the service that evening was a moment of high celebration, it was also a time for solemn remembering. The offering of almost \$1,000. was given to the purchase of chimes for the new organ in memory of the five young men who would not return. Inscribed on the memorial plaque are the names: Berman Bolick, Marin B. Cook, Charles Isenhower, Oswald Lowrance, J. Horace Yount. Faded photographs on lace tablecloths or reverently displayed on highly polished end tables of smiling young men caught through all time in dress uniforms are poignantly brought to mind each time the chimes summon to prayer, call to confirmation or underline the Words of our Lord in His Supper. The battles were over, but the

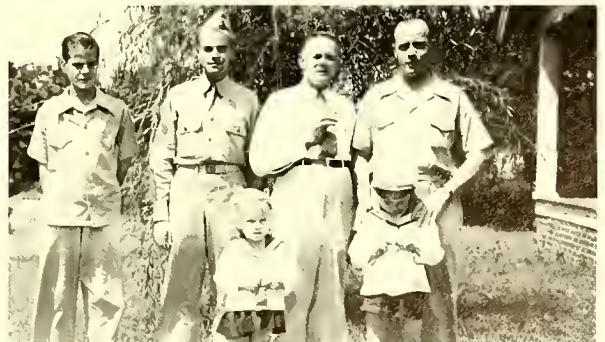
celebration was mixed with sorrow and tempered with a new realization of the horror and futility of nation destroying nation in world war.

The ten year period, 1935-1945, was as difficult as any Concordia had yet experienced. Disappointment, disease and death each dripped its acid upon "Hearts Together" and etched in pain the soul of the congregation. But the Word remained, "A Mighty Fortress is our God! . . . He's by our side upon the plain with His good gifts and Spirit! . . . The Kingdom ours remaineth!" Concordia learned anew the power implicit in the questions scrawled anonymously on the hospital wall:

The cry of man's anguish went up to God,
 "Lord take away pain!
 The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made;
 The close coiling chain
 That strangles the heart: the burden that weighs
 On the wings that would soar —
 Lord take away pain from the world Thou hast made
 That it love Thee the more!"

Then answered the Lord to the cry of the world,
 "Shall I take away pain,
 And with it the power of the soul to endure,
 Made strong by the strain?
 Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart,
 And sacrifice high?
 Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
 bronzed brows to the sky?
 Shall I take away love that redeems with a price,
 And smiles with its loss?
 Can ye spare from your lives that would cling unto
 mine
 The Christ on his cross?"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran pastor who was martyred by the Nazis in Easter of 1945, had begun to write of a "world come of age". A world in which mankind would have to recognize its responsibility for the destruction or the creation of a livable future. Although Concordia knew neither the man nor his writings a maturing people of God were being formed into a "congregation come of age" and preparing to take responsibility for its share of risk in an increasingly dangerous tomorrow.



Robert McRee, sons and grandchildren.



James Carl Hunsucker
1893-1918



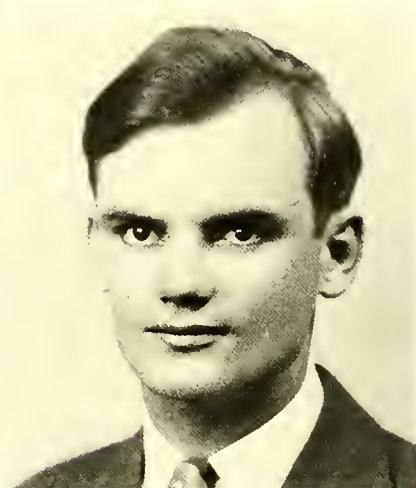
George Dewey Lail
1898-1918



Berman Wilson Bolick
1915-1943



Marion Butler Cook, Jr.
1921-1943



Charles L. Isenhower
1922-1944



Oswald Gerhardt Lowrance
1916-1945

THE MEMBERS OF CONCORDIA
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN WORLD WARS I AND II



Junius Horace Yount
1923-1945

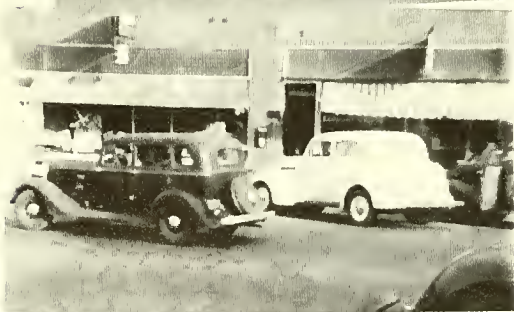


Photographs





Photographs



Chapter XII



Concordia would be able to remember...
summoned to praise...speak of its hope.



"Five Points"

The world did not seem dangerous. It seemed for the first time in years safe and ordered. Military expansionism had been stopped in its tracks! Tyranny had been taught a lesson in Democracy it would not soon forget! And if the mushroom-shaped cloud which towered above Hiroshima threatened the victor as well as the victim, for the most part the "Bomb" seemed to be in good hands — its use virtually unthinkable, its user benign. The "atomic age" we would call it — and if it began with a terrifying "bang" it was soon transformed into an almost blessed "boom"; an economic boom, a baby boom, a morale boom, a religious boom. The fox-holes yielded no atheists and gratitude mixed with a renewed commitment to the "American Way" made returning servicemen the advance guard of a religious awakening. Christ's Church is called not simply to reflect society, but to create and influence the secular order. If the collective community of Christians did reflect the revival of this period, it also created, influenced and shaped the religious "boom".

Nowhere was this post-war phenomenon more evident than in the Concordia which emerges with such excitement and power in the next fifteen years. The returning heroes took active leadership roles both as elected officers in the congregation and as involved and dedicated members. This zeal for service when teamed with Pastor Lineberger's pastoral instincts, leadership skills and knowledge of the congregation and community make this period 1945-1960 one of the most exciting in Concordia's history.

A brief walk through the statistics and organizational life of the congregation during this decade-and-one-half gives a feel for the surge of energy Concordia was experiencing. Charlotte Brady provides this "tour" and running commentary on life in the congregation: "To a great degree the spiritual condition of the congregation can be measured by attendance at the Lord's Table, increased membership and participation in Sunday School activities. From 1944 to 1949 the Communion attendance climbed steadily upward each year from 1,442 to 2,460.

The total number of souls increased from 597 in 1944 to 815 in 1949. The Sunday School had a membership of 375 in 1949, which included 148 in the Adult Bible Class. Baptisms celebrated numbered: 21 in 1945; 13 in 1946; 39 in 1947; 16 in 1948; 26 in 1949.

An analysis of financial statistics too indicates this expression of new energy and excitement as offerings rose from \$18,000.00 in 1944, to an average of \$37,000.00 over the next four years. Society activities are so numerous during this rejuvenation that they create a story in themselves. There were six organized groups in 1949, each doing its share in combined projects as well as having specific activities within its own membership. The oldest of these societies was the *Ladies Aid*, numbering 60 members. The *Dorcas* was formed in 1944, and consisted largely of ladies who either worked at jobs outside the home or had small children and were unable to attend the daytime meetings of the Ladies Aid. In 1949 this was the largest of all groups with an active membership of 96. The *Lutheran Laymens League* had grown to a membership of 65 in the last year of the "forties". The *Walther League* made up of Junior and Senior High School students lists 42 Juniors and 28 Seniors in 1948. The *Parent-Teachers League* begun in 1946 when the school again opened enrolled 55 charter members in January of 1947. The LLL sponsored *Conover Boy Scout Troop #3* contributed many hours to the church in the "Pro Deo et Patria" program and numbered 18. Three of the most active organizations in Concordia were not societies in the general sense. They were however, of tremendous value to the congregation — especially in the public services and for the spiritual welfare of the congregation. The *Choir*, the *Ushers Corps* and the *Visitation Committee* contributed to an atmosphere of pride, care and good will.

Projects and service to the congregation by these groups are so numerous they cannot all be listed; perhaps a few highlights would indicate the nature of their ministry: the adoption of new missions in the Carolinas, the creation of "Carolina Districts" of the LWML and the LLL, new choir robes, distribution of booklets, tracts and Christian magazines, Wheatridge Seals for the tuberculosis sanitorium, Christmas card

sales, Seasonal decoration and broadcast of Christmas music in Conover, evangelism visitation, promotion of Bible Study, nursing home and shut-in visitation with brief services. Congregational fellowship was enhanced by both youth and adult groups in activities like wiener roasts, congregational picnics, hayrides, bowling parties, watermelon feasts, swimming parties, theatre parties, ice cream socials, plays, talent contests and the regular trips to Linn Haven. All organizations had as their purpose (1) Growth in Christian Knowledge, (2) Service in a very material way to the programs of the congregation, and (3) Christian fellowship. There was perhaps no single project that created more interest and excitement among the organizations and the congregation in general during these years than the re-creation of Concordia's Christian Day School."

A Lutheran Day School of sorts had been offered to the children of the area years before the congregation came into existence. Taught by pioneer Lutheran pastors and moved from place to place, depending on where the children were and whose home could be used, this education was at best sporadic. But with the founding of the college, a primary department was established which was to become the first Concordia Christian Day School. The Missouri Synod entrance into the Catawba Valley saw the separation of "college" and primary departments more in keeping with Missouri's practice. The



Board of Education:

R. Lineberger, W. Brady, H. Isenhour, P. Henry, H. Voigt

congregation assumed responsibility for the school sometime after 1894. Mr. Preston M. Dellinger was engaged by the congregation as its first teacher and opened a school in a building on North Main Street — approximately at the main intersection of the community. This school grew and apparently thrived until the economic conditions attendant to the Depression forced its closing in 1933.

The re-opening of the school for the 1946-'47 school term was surrounded by a flurry of building activity that was to create a congregational style for years to come. Seventy pupils in six grades were taught by two teachers, Mr. Harry R. Voigt and Mr. Alfred Beck, a Concordia Seminary student. In a style typical of the



Concordia of those years, this major project was taken on with great enthusiasm, large amounts of volunteer labor, significant contributions from the do-it-yourselfers of the LLL and a determination to do it right. Led by the School Board, Horace J. Isenhower Sr., Walter Brady, Dexter Simmons and the latter's replacement, Percy Henry, the old classrooms were remodeled and refurnished, a new school building was begun and dedicated in March of 1948, the seventh and eighth grades were added, a third teacher was brought on the faculty and a Principal's home was built. The opening was not accomplished without some significant sacrifices on the part of many and especially the teachers. Mr. Voigt remembers: "In September of 1947, three rooms were opened even though the new addition was still not above basement level. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grades met in the rear of the church. Pews were moved each Monday and desks were brought in. This arrangement continued until the first of December when these grades moved into a still unfinished but usable classroom in the new addition." The first graduates of Concordia's "old/new" school were Robert Hunsucker, Joe Kaylor, Shirley Lail and Dorothy Matthews.



Concordia Park

Concordia was only beginning to discover its potential and re-discover its sense of mission. If the re-opening of the school meant a renewal of Christian Education for the young, what could that beautiful site across the street where the college had once invited and taught and prepared mean? This thought must have burned in the minds of many of Concordia's people. The oak grove sheltered the one remaining building on campus, the boys' dormitory affectionately known as the "Coop". For a brief period of time the building was used as a kind of apartment house and managed by a young seminary graduate, the Rev. Gerhardt Wagner, and his small family. In 1940 Pastor Wagner accepted a Call to Irmo, South Carolina and the building was left, in the prophet Isaiah's words, "like a deserted lodge in a cucumber patch". In what may have seemed to some to

be a questionable exercise of good judgement, the congregation purchased the old campus from Synod in 1944 for \$5,000.00. In an almost ironic turn of events, the congregation now owned the land which it had "borrowed" for its first nineteen years of existence. The LLL led the congregation in dismantling the old dorm and transforming Concordia College Campus into "Concordia Park", and the acres so rich in memories became a recreation and relaxation spot for the community. A new phenomenon was sweeping the nation and drawing people in automobiles by the millions into a "highly questionable" environment known as the Drive-in Theatre. Luther had four centuries earlier established a style of "sanctifying the unholy" under his famous rubric, "why should the devil have the good tunes?" For Blessed Martin this meant taking highly singable secular songs and marrying them to good, solid biblical texts and words that sang of pure and practical theology. Taking a cue from the great Reformer, Concordia joined a secular idea, the drive-in, to a sacred purpose, prayer, praise and preaching and created the "Open Air Gospel Service". Cars streamed into Concordia Park from all over the County to take part in these Sunday Evening events first offered in 1947. This experience from his youth is warmly remembered by the Rev. Larry R. Lineberger, son of Concordia's Pastor: "I remember carrying chairs and riding on the back of Floyd Brown's red pickup truck with the piano for the Open Air Gospel Services. There was an excitement and a fervor about those cool summer evenings that no other service will ever match."



Open Air Gospel Service

But Concordia did match this service with yet another venture into proclaiming the Gospel. From the moment in 1900 when R. A. Fessenden first broadcast *voice by radio*, visionary church leaders began to excite each other with the possibilities of this medium to "go and teach all nations". The Missouri Synod had since the 1920's promoted an incredibly successful religious radio broadcast, "The Lutheran Hour", and its staccato voiced preacher Dr. Walter A. Maier who proclaimed "Christ to the Nations". Radio station WNNC opened in Newton on June 19, 1948 and by July 1 Concordia was broadcast-

ing a live fifteen minute program of choir music, prayer and meditation called "Concordia Vespers" each Thursday evening.

Pausing only briefly for a delay in the Christian Day School opening that Fall caused by another polio outbreak, the congregation plunged into the completion of yet another project. A new three manual organ was purchased, installation begun and dedicated in 1949. Built by the Wicks organ company Concordia's "King of Instruments" was designed and installed by its own organist, F. W. "Beck" Moehlmann. Once again it was the organizations that contributed major funds, volunteers like Arthur Little and Walter Brady who designed and built the grill work and the men of the LLL who enabled the congregation to enjoy this beautiful instrument at a cost of only \$13,148.15.

Concordia's continued growth and the perceived need for a Missouri Synod congregation near downtown Newton led the congregation and District to establish a "daughter congregation" in early 1949. Holy Cross congregation led by the Rev. R. P. Sieving was born with 39 members of Concordia and the assistance of Pastor J. L. Summers, Executive Secretary of Missions, and Pastor Lineberger. Not all of the congregation's interests and energies were directed toward things organizational, however. Two personal items of special interest brightened the meetings of the members; the weddings of a

son and daughter of the congregation, a brother and sister, who married teachers in the parochial school. Judena Spencer became the bride of Robert Hentscher (Concordia teacher 1947-'49) in 1950 and J. R. Spencer married Betty Yount the following year. Betty was teaching Concordia's middle grades and went on to serve as teacher in the newly added Kindergarten (1961) and as School Principal (1970-1976).

Congregational indebtedness connected with the re-establishment of the school was completely retired in 1951 and almost suddenly interests were re-directed to a long dreamed of and much needed project which centered in Concordia Park. In 1952 a Church Building Fund was established with a goal of \$100,000.00 set for 1955. Concordia's dream was on its way! It was an excited and happy group of Concordians who hosted the Southeastern District Convention that year.

Nineteen hundred fifty-three added to the congregation's enthusiasm for it marked the Diamond Jubilee, the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church. The year began, however, with a sad farewell to one of the congregation's most faithful servants. A marker year is a fitting time for counting blessings and tracing memories and many of both were experienced as hymns of hope and the Resurrection filled the old church at the funeral of Pastor Mennen in January.



LLL Minstrel Show

January also saw the opening of the Church Cornerstone as the school newspaper states: On January 16, some men of the LLL opened the Church's cornerstone to try to find out the exact date of the founding of Concordia congregation.

The Stone contained a Bible, Lutheran Witness, Catechism, Newton, Hickory and Asheville newspapers of June 1893 and a piece of paper having writing on it. This crumbled to pieces as it was picked up, and no information could be obtained from it. A Newton newspaper dated June 15, 1893, contained a notice that the cornerstone of Concordia Church would soon be laid. It is therefore assumed that the stone was laid on Sunday, June 18, 1893. The date of the founding of the congregation was, however, not discovered, but it is believed by many members that it was first organized in 1879, a date over the southwest portal of the church building. The poor condition of the materials found in the stone is due to them not having been placed in a box but directly in contact with the stone.

A Hickory Daily Record, a few church bulletins, a Lutheran Witness Supplement containing an article about our school dedication and a typewritten letter by the pastor were added to the contents of the stone. These were wrapped in aluminum foil. Officers in charge of the opening of the stone were Pastor R. F. Lineberger, Mr. Edgar Gantt and Mr. Floyd Brown Sr."

February was also a time for a temporary set-back as the Concordia School News reported: "The flu epidemic is believed to be the worst since the year 1919. Our school so far has not been too badly hit. Our attendance is down about six per cent. Miss Kuerschner was out one day. Many, however, have hoarse voices and coughs. In many of the neighboring schools an attendance drop of 25 to 50 percent is reported."

"Police Action" in Korea was over and with the exception of serious wounds suffered by O. C. Isenhower in that conflict Concordia's many sons returned home. The other conflict waging on the medical fronts of hospital and laboratory against polio still affected the congregation. Mrs. Hubert Coyner records in her Diary: "Not a child in Sunday School or Church Service — quarantine from July 12 to August 24... July 23 — seventy-five cases in County; July 24 — eighty cases; July 25 — eighty-three cases."

The crisis was past and vaccine on the way when Concordia gathered in October to celebrate seventy-five years of God's grace. In remembrance of His mercies past and with praise for tomorrow, Pastor Lineberger led the congregation's celebration with a sermon on the text and Anniversary Motto, "The Lord hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad." Psalm 126:3. In the evening another service gathered around the theme lifted by Southeastern District President, Rudolph S. Ressmeyer, "Concordia Marches On". When this seventy-fifth year was marked Concordia had a baptized membership of 863; a school enrollment of 85 and a Sunday School of 400.

The Southeastern District returned to Conover in 1954 to celebrate its fifteenth anniversary held at St. John's, Concordia's old and faithful sister congregation. The traditional Opening Communion Service with Dr. John W. Behnken, Synodical President, guest preacher, suddenly became very nontraditional and provided area participants an unforgettable experience. The *Lutheran Witness* "District Supplement" reports: "Dr. Behnken had just ended his sermon and Pastor Summers had asked the congregation to rise for the singing of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God". Immediately after the organ intoned the hymn, the electric power in the whole



Christian Day School, 1952

area failed. The church was suddenly thrown into total darkness and the organ was silenced. All who attended the service will never forget the forceful singing of this mighty hymn by a congregation of seven hundred voices in total darkness. But on the altar were the lighted candles flanking a huge crucifix impressively reminding all that when all human powers fail and when all the lights of human reason and wisdom go out, God, like a Mighty Fortress, is still there, and the Christ of the Cross is still with us."

The year at Concordia emphasized the Family and Family Worship. Sunday sermons, tracts, movies, topic discussion and home visitation by the Pastor made an impact on the 272 families which Concordia counted in 1954. A special feature in May, "Family Month", gave special recognition to a "family" if all members were present for Sunday School.

Concordia lost a dear member of its family with the death of Pastor and Professor C. O. Smith in August. A native of Catawba County, Professor Smith had devoted almost his entire ministry to the College and area churches. Concordia hosted a fiftieth anniversary in the ministry for this faithful servant in 1950 and in the funeral service four years later recognized the passing not simply of a man, but of an era.

If the death of Professor Smith marked the ending of one era, the year 1955 signalled the beginning of a new day for the congregation. The 1952 congregational goal of \$100,000.00 had been met and surpassed by the end of 1955. A Steering Committee and Planning Council was established with O. W. Bolick, Floyd Brown Sr., Frank Holler, F. W. Moehlmann, Walter Brady and Pastor Lineberger serving. Plans, projects, dreams, activities, funds, meetings, discussions, disagreements began to tumble in upon each other and intensify interest and focus energies as perhaps never before in Concordia's history. Against the back-drop of a "Sharing Christ" through a "Preaching-Teaching-Reaching" Mission and a Sixth Reunion of College Alumnae on the old "campus-that-was" in 1956, the "Charlotte News" records the following exchange between Architect A. G. Odell and Pastor Lineberger: "The architect didn't laugh when a Missouri Lutheran minister in Conover told him he wanted a contemporary church with Gothic lines, built in the form of a cross. The Rev. Richard F. Lineberger, pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church at Conover, fully expected a derisive hoot from his architect when he asked for such a structure. Instead, Architect A. G. Odell Jr. accepted it as an appropriate wish and as a challenge."



Bible Study Class in rear of old church

The official Building Committee now made up of Walter Brady, congregational President; O. W. Bolick, Floyd Brown Sr., Arthur Little, and representatives from the major organizations: Mrs. D. E. Bolick, Ladies Aid; Mrs. J. R. Spencer, Dorcas; Hal Kaylor, Sunday School; Darwin Yount, Walther League; and Martin McRee, Laymens League; pondered and finally presented preliminary plans to the congregation. An audible shock wave ripples through the Voters Assembly as the plans are viewed. The building proposed is radically contemporary and Concordia is staunchly conservative! In a cultural climate accustomed to small white wooden church buildings dotting a landscape punctuated only occasionally by a large, stately red-brick colonial "cathedral" these plans for a copper and glass vault resting on rose brick and laminated beam at a geometric angle few can pronounce and even fewer understand leaves the assembly breathless. The design is explained and deep attention given. It is all here: the strength of Lutheran Doctrine and the solidness of Biblical tradition — Concordia would be able to *remember*; the prayers moving upward with the angle of the beams the praise focused forward to the Altar and the Cross of Christ — Concordia would be summoned to *praise*; the windows on and open to the world, a dramatic statement in wood and glass and metal that God's people build toward tomorrow — Concordia would speak of its *hope*. There is much to think about; much to talk about; much to pray about. It is now April 1956. The members of Concordia gather again to review the plans, wonder at the scale

model and vote. The vote is taken; 194 for — 16 against. Concordia will build!

Events continue to sweep Concordia toward its dream. Mr. Gilbert Pingel is installed in August as Principal and teacher to replace Mr. Voigt who after a decade of faithful service and school-building accepted a Call to Concordia, Missouri. Concordia's first school bus is purchased, a one-ton panel truck converted for use as a bus. In September Mr. Pingel writes: "Our school enrollment is 85...The new bus picks up forty-seven pupils and serves thirty-four families." Final building plans are completed and in December the building contract is awarded to the Herman-Sipe Construction Company with a low bid of \$429,433.00.

Again Charlotte Brady invites us to remember... "The day dawns murky and misty — inclement in general. It is Sunday, January 27, 1957, GROUND BREAKING DAY FOR THE NEW CHURCH. Immediately following the morning worship service in which Pastor Lineberger preaches a forceful sermon, "Building on a Sure Foundation", the congregation of more than 500 proceeds to Concordia Park. Pastor Lineberger and Building Committee Chairman Walter Brady perform the ceremonial spading of the first shovelfuls of earth followed by the other Committee representatives. The choir of Concordia Collegiate Institute, Bronxville, N. Y. provides special music for the moment." In the figure of Isaiah, the first green sprout begins to emerge from the charred stump of the old college as Concordia Park becomes a construction site.

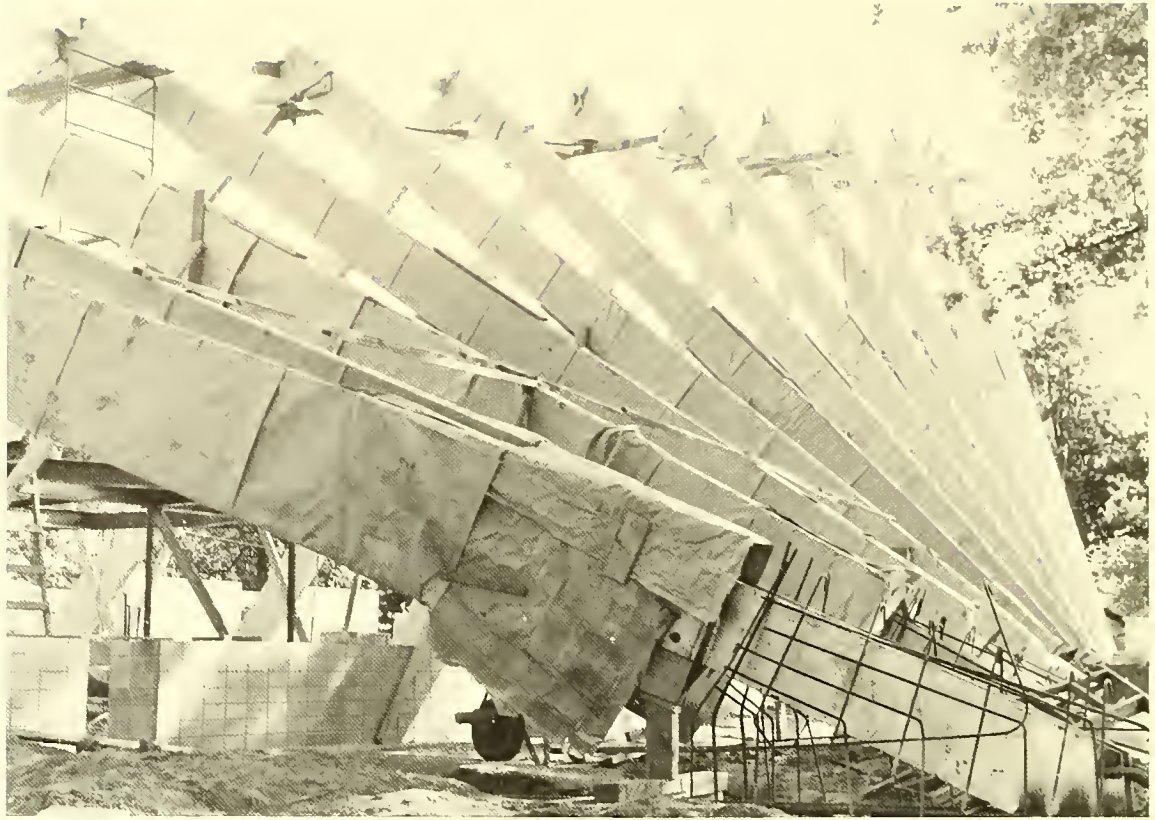


Ground Breaking

Concordia Park suddenly becomes a beehive of activity: Earth is moved, forms are placed, concrete is poured and plumbers and electricians scatter through the forms with pipe and wire. In July the arrival of the first laminated beams from Wisconsin signals the rising of the building above ground level. It also signals a July lumber bill of \$50,000.00. Hundreds of persons from all over the

Catawba Valley drive by the site to witness this odd-shaped series of great beams lifted in such obvious chaos toward the sky. The comments of the "side walk engineers" reflect the mystery of the architecture: "which end do you go in?"... "do they know what made it do that?"... "it'll never stand up!"





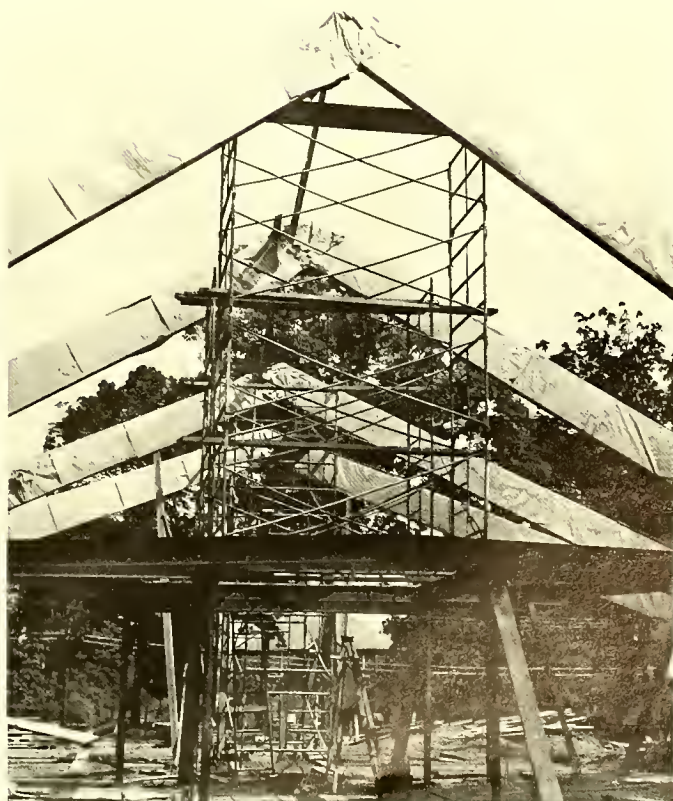


Concordia's Organ Movers



Across the street at the old church, the building fund is growing even as it is decreasing. Informal Bible lectures are set for Sunday evenings as preparations are made for the "Victorious Living" theme of Lent. Palm Sunday and fifteen confirmands are renewed in their Baptismal Promise... May retains the theme of Family Month and a registration is made of families who attend Sunday School together... the Walther League holds a candlelight service commemorating sixty-four years of Synodical Youth Ministry... Vacation Bible school lists a summer enrollment of one hundred seventy-one... A Catawba Valley Reformation Service is held at Lenoir Rhyne's P. E. Monroe Auditorium for all Lutherans with special music by a mass childrens' choir... thirty-one baptisms are recorded as the end of the year brings a blessed Christmas Sunday School Service with the beauty and simplicity of children who sing to a rapt congregation of 598 persons... the Rev. J. Franklin Yount returns to his home once again as guest speaker on the last Sunday of the year with timely words, "Some Things to Forget; Some Things to Remember".

Changes occur daily in the appearance of the old church. The pulpit, lectern, altar and pews are refinished for use in the new chapel and the bell manually rung for sixty years is wired for an electric toll. The beautiful memorial stained glass windows are gently removed and placed into the chapel. Spring brings an LLL sponsored project, "Work Saturdays on our new church grounds". A rake, shovel, strong back and willing heart when joined in the fellowship of these busy days make work easy and the joy overflow. The Sunday School Staff sets aside special work nights to move all the materials and set up the new classrooms. To the accompaniment of sore backs and good humor the organ is moved by the members at Beck Moehlmann's direction to its new home in a choir loft.



The last Baptisms, Tina Marie Johnson and Amanda Hunsucker, are recorded with much happiness and the last funerals, Robert Spencer and Mrs. Henry (Carrie) Love speak a kind of sad farewell to the old church as the Dedication Day is set, the 20th of April 1958.

There is yet the most majestic of days for *remembering* and *hoping* and *praising*, Easter. Once again the hymns that have crowded the corners and rafters of the simple sanctuary since 1897 roll across the congregation. "Our

Heritage — The Gospel of the Risen Christ", is the theme with which Pastor Lineberger challenges the congregation the following Sunday and the closing hymn, "Ebenezer — The Lord hath helped us hitherto" is a proper way both to say "goodbye" and to set the terms by which the congregation will move into its new day. "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us".



Chapter XIII



The spirits soar, the prayers ascend, praises rise
and all focus at the altar resting precisely
on the site of the old College building.

"For many years O God of grace,
"This Church has been Thy dwelling place."

The words roll out of the great congregation with conviction and deep emotion. The Liturgy of the People of God begins in the old Church where this morning there is "standing room only". Concordia knows that "God does not dwell in temples made with hands", but an earth and time bound people need places — holy spaces to keep tradition and theology; sacred treasures to store memories and hope; pilgrim rests to center life and offer a reflection, no matter how fragile, of another Kingdom that abides. Within these walls which have served as a shelter of the spirit for two generations the hymn rolls on...

"Here children have been born anew..."

"Here many found a table spread..."

"Here when the marriage vows were made..."

"Here mourners with their troubled hearts..."

With the memories of Baptisms, Communion, weddings, funerals and so many other moments crowding the old sanctuary and flooding the soul, the processional moves out through the doors of a precious yesterday into the bright, green spring morning.

The distance the 848 pilgrims cover this Dedication Morning between "God's dwelling places" is less than 100 yards but the journey has taken — depending upon our point of reference — 23 years or 60 years or 80 years. It has been 23 years since the burning of the college; 60 years since the building of the first church; 80 years since the founding of the congregation.

So many memories: the voices and faces and events run together, then quietly focus into vivid recollection of the momentous and the trivial — the stuff of which life is created.

So many memories: the stentorian voice of Mr. Claude Schell booming out the Sunday School statistics, Larry Lineberger remembers, "as if they were the most significant numbers east of the Mississippi," "...and the way he sang hymns...I always wondered, 'why so loud'...I should have been marvelling, 'What a faith!'"

The chalk dust which marked the ceiling for years; left by an errant eraser hurled in youthful exuberance at that critical moment when the teacher stepped out of the room.

The funeral home fans which waved in a sea of greeting to the preacher as he mounted the pulpit on a hot, humid summer morning.

The chancel groaning contentedly beneath its great "Harvest Home" burden. The magnificent crystal chandelier — a touch of elegance in a spartan sanctuary.

The children staring wide-eyed into what must have been an endless expanse of darkened auditorium and lisping the Christmas recitation...The parents struggling to see...The Christmas "pokes" filled with oranges, chocolate cream drops, hard candy and English walnuts...The Christmas trees that "reached to the ceiling".



Last Confirmation Class—Old Church



"Harvest Home"



LLL Bar-B-Que Supper

The Sexton, Mr. Arthur Wagner, who rang the bell just as Mr. Spencer had done before him... A small man, the big bell took all he had, but he rang it with such love. He would hand his big, gold watch to someone or lay it on the little table by the bell rope — always beginning right on the second — ending exactly the moment the second hand swept the hour.

The meticulous counting of the ceiling's tongued and grooved boards, waiting for the service to end...

The memories suddenly stop at the great doors of the new Church. Beneath Luther's Seal set in stained glass the entrance prayer is intoned and President Brady opens the door. The congregation moves into its new home to the martial sound of "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star", and Mozart's "Gloria". The experience, unlike so many others, does not disappoint — the spirits soar, the prayers ascend, praises rise and all focus at the Altar resting precisely on the site of the old College Administration Building. At last, after forty years of waiting and working the new building has been built. Once again the College and Church are one!

Another Service of dedication is held for the larger community in the afternoon with 714 in attendance.

Dr. William Kohn, Southeastern District President, preaches the Morning Service and former District President, the Rev. Rudolph Ressmeyer is the afternoon speaker.

A Musical Dedication Service the following Thursday evening with the Newton-Conover High School Chorus again calls the community to celebration.

A series of Open Houses are held the following three Sunday afternoons and by May 18th the bulletin can announce, "More than 6,000 have visited our church since dedication." The average attendance for the first three Sundays is 540.

"The contemporary church with Gothic lines built in the form of a cross" brings to Concordia and the community much attention — some of it nationwide — and to its architect a number of awards. In November the *Charlotte Observer* and other area newspapers carry an Associated Press story written by *Hickory Daily Record* Writer Helen Ross: "There is no other like it in the United States, and probably nowhere else. It caused considerable furor and comment mostly adverse, when construction began. For Catawba County descendants of the conservative Pennsylvanian Dutch are loath to cast aside the conventional for what could be called the bizarre. Today however, the county's citizens look with pride upon the odd shaped structure of copper and pink brick and multicolor glass. In the church guest book, a Roman Catholic from Wisconsin has written: 'The most beautiful church I have ever seen.' Directly below that comment, a Baptist from Reidsville has inscribed simply: 'Ditto.' " The author of this well-done article even manages to work in the mysterious shape of the roof-line, "the form of the roof is composed of two hyperbolic paraboloids."





Adult Bible Study—New Sanctuary



Pastor and Mrs. Lineberger—25th Anniversary of Ordination

During the last six months of 1958, the LLL begins a major project of converting the old church building into an auditorium-gym for school and youth activities. This is completed and dedicated in February 1959, in a special program presented by the children of the Christian Day School.

In April 1959, Concordia stops to evaluate the meanings and implications of its new environment and life-style. An increase of 68 worshippers per Sunday is noted as well as an additional 730 communions for the year. The method of announcement for the Lord's Supper is changed from personal appearance before the pastor to telephoning in this important "reservation" and preparation. Thus the years see a gradual shift in emphasis and style from a "Confessional Service" the Saturday evening before Communion to a pre-service preparation on Sunday morning, to announcement in person the evening before the Sacrament is offered and now to the use of the telephone. The "Harvest Home" Festival is moved from October to coincide with the national Thanksgiving holiday; the beneficiary of these food offerings is changed from the College, to the needy, to the pastor and finally to the Christian Day School. Easter lilies purchased by members in memory or in honor of special individuals are arranged by Margaret Sparkman and others in the shape of a cross or bank the altar on Easter morning. The new outdoor pulpit is used as the center for the Open Air Gospel Services and the new chapel is enjoyed for School Chapel and other small services. Evening Vacation Bible School is offered to adults as well as children and a Confirmation "reunion" with class roll call and the renewal of Baptismal/Confirmation vows is sponsored by the Walther League. The first Baptism — David Brooks — the first weddings, the first funerals are recorded and already memories begin to build and hope is proclaimed. It is difficult to evaluate the total impact of the building upon the congregational style, but it seems quite safe to say that at no time during its history has Concordia intentionally made so many changes or confronted these changes more positively and creatively. The doctrine, the theology, the tradition is yet conservative, but the congregation knows what it believes and in whom it trusts. With this solid center the life-style can be creative and expansive and Pastor Lineberger offers this encouragement in the first anniversary sermon, "The Christian's Duty: Let Your Light Shine".

In September of 1959, a surprise service for Pastor Lineberger on the occasion of his 25th anniversary in the Pastoral Ministry is celebrated. The Rev. Leslie F. Frerking, Pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Charlotte and President of the Southeastern District, serves as Preacher and Liturgist. It is a time for remembering once again as the congregation gathers for a picnic; lifting memories from Pastor Lineberger's years as a student at the College and the difficulties and victories of a fifteen year pastorate at Concordia.



First Confirmation Class—New Church

For Concordia and the nation the decade had been a good one. If there had been a Korean conflict it had been resolved and a stable and noncommunist South Korea had been secured. If there had been an economic recession — the wheels of industry and more particularly the furniture and textile factories of Catawba County were churning out massive quantities of goods and services which consumers snapped up. If our universities had imported some post-war European pessimism — our youth countered with a "Happy Days" buoyancy. If the Russian Sputnik had beaten us into space — we had one-upped with our own space spectaculars. If the Hungarian Freedom Fighters had been crushed by Communist tanks — we had stabilized other nations with little or no bloodshed and humane methods. We laughed at the "moles" who built backyard "bomb-shelters" and responded with sky-scrapers that transformed the skyline of every major city and with contemporary churches that promised to transform the soul.

Concordia is once again, a microcosm — a study in brief — of what is happening within the Christian Church in the United States and particularly the congregations of the Lutheran Confession. The post-war religious boom has reached its peak; from Billy Graham in "Metropolis" to the family congregations along pastoral backroads, religious interest and participation have reached an all time high.

Never before has church membership grown so rapidly. Never in the nation's history has attendance been so high. Never have as many new congregations sprung up, foreign mission fields invited and new buildings been erected. Never has discipleship been so easy and "following the Galilean" so enjoyable. The church, perhaps, should have been questioning the "cheaped grace" and inexpensive discipleship, but even the most Jeremiah-like of prophets could not foresee and did not predict the chaos of the next fifteen years. Civil Rights

was a watchword only for elitest snobs; Vietnam was a French rubber plantation and Watergate was "under construction". Feelings were expansive and progressive. We are ready for the "soaring sixties".

For Concordia the first half of 1960 is filled with activity in preparation for the Fourteenth Convention of the Southeastern District which we host with much pride in May. An Every Member Visitation results in 524 Loyalty Pledges to attend every evening Lenten Service. This effort is part of Concordia's participation in a Synod-wide Evangelism thrust. The LLL and Walther League make a Church Census in Conover and distribute invitations to the Open Air Gospel Services. The Christian Day School opens its doors this Fall to an enrollment of ninety-four; the highest in its history! As one member recalls the year, "It was a good year for Concordia and we entered 1961 with feelings of gratitude. Perhaps we were a bit too content with our accomplishments."

January 1961 begins with Sunday morning radio broadcasts of the Service. New Church Officers are installed; Joe Sigmon follows Jerome Bolick as congregational President. The "Pastoral Report" shows a Communicant Membership of 680, and on Palm Sunday twenty young people say "Yes!" to God's Promise in Baptism making a total of 700 communicants.

Pastor Lineberger, in his letter of February 23rd to all members away from home, expresses his appreciation for the work being done by the LLL in preparation for our first Kindergarten class to begin in September with Betty Spencer as teacher.

On the 23rd of April, Pastor Lineberger chooses the hymns, "As We Begin Another Week" and "Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus" to add meaning to the theme of his sermon, "Living Witnesses to Christianity". (1 Peter 2:11, 12). The hymn "Saints of God, the Dawn is Brightening" brings the special day to a close.

On Tuesday he writes again to the members away from home: "We had some truly blessed days during Holy Week. Having walked in spirit with our blessed Savior through the depths of His passion on Thursday and Friday, it was a glorious thing to commemorate His Resurrection from the grave on Easter morn and to hear again the wonderful news of victory over sin, death and the grave. Our Sunrise Service, held jointly with St. John's, was attended by about 250. This was not bad considering the very cold weather. The 11:00 a.m. Service filled the nave to overflowing and placed some worshippers in the transept..."

This letter is to be his last formal congregational act. On Wednesday morning, April 26th, Concordia is shocked and shaken by the news of his death.



The Rev. R. F. Lineberger

In a letter to these same people on May 2nd, School Principal Gilbert Pingel describes simply and movingly the details of this period in Concordia's history: "Just a week ago Pastor Lineberger sent you a letter with the new devotional booklet. No one would have thought that this was to be his last work for him here in the congregation.

"Many of you have no doubt heard the shocking news that greeted us early last Wednesday morning. Pastor Lineberger was called to his heavenly home rather suddenly. He had gone to the doctor on Monday and Tuesday mornings since he had had some pains particularly Saturday while mowing his lawn. Then shortly after 7:30 p.m. Tuesday he had an attack and the doctor ordered him taken to the hospital immediately. Around ten he had another severe attack, about 1:30 he lost consciousness and His Lord and Savior received him into heaven shortly before 4 a.m. Wednesday... The funeral was Friday afternoon at 4. A short service was held in the parsonage at 2:30, conducted by Pastor Bruening, second Vice-President of the Southeastern District. He had a thoughtful, consoling message based on last Sunday's Gospel lesson (John 16:16-23). The body was taken to church at 3 to lie in state for an hour. A full, overflowing church was present for the funeral service conducted by Pastor Naumann of Christ Church, Hickory, a very close friend. Pastor Kohn from Hyattsville, Md. based his sermon on Matt. 28:6. Hymns used were "I Know That My Redeemer Lives", "Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness", and "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". Burial was at Conover cemetery."

The "Brave New Frontier" to which the young President John F. Kennedy had pointed only three months earlier seems suddenly very far away as the Concordia family begins to reassemble the pieces of its life together. Pastor Lineberger has been such a strong leader and tireless doer that his loss is felt both personally and organizationally in every step of the congregation's walk alone...together. Concordia has enjoyed a consistent pastoral tenure for more than forty years and the experience of being so abruptly deprived of a shepherd for almost an entire year is a difficult one...but perhaps a necessary one. Mr. Pingel continues to keep letters like the one above going out. He also assists the Church Council and Officers in securing vacancy pastors and when none are available he takes charge and delivers many sermons himself. His help and guidance as emergency shepherd can scarcely be overstated. At the same time Concordia is blessed with gifted and committed leadership at every turn and as one of these leaders recalls: "There seemed to be a closer bond among us during this ten month period. We were more aware of our responsibilities and discovered that perhaps as individuals we had not been applying ourselves as diligently and whole-heartedly as we should — taking everything more or less for granted. It seemed that God was using this time to bring a new dimension into our lives. Many became aware of HOW a lot of things get done in church activities and this was a good learning experience. In the midst of many changes one constant remained, God's Gospel and our love for His Church where we could hear this Gospel and praise Him for it!"



*Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Pingel
25 Years Teaching Ministry*

Twenty different preachers, including teacher Pingel, are heard during the forty-five Sundays covering the period from April 30, 1961 to March 4, 1962. Mr. Pingel is called upon ten times and the Rev. Granville Leonard of Holy Cross, Newton, conducts 8:30 a.m. Services during the last three months of the vacancy.

The congregation does more than merely "run in place" during this period however. The new Kindergarten program begins right on schedule in the Fall of 1961 with Betty Spencer as teacher. The congregation assists Mrs. Lineberger in finding and purchasing a home. The Yount house next to the Teacherage provides both a home for her and an apartment for the two women teachers in the School. This simple act speaks volumes both of the deep appreciation and love for the Linebergers and of the quality of care Concordia expresses for its pastors and their families. Too often the pastor's place in a congregation is viewed as an object of constant criticism; too seldom is it appreciated as a loving focus of the peoples' care and prayer.

Concordia extends Calls to a number of pastors during this period, but experiences for the first time in almost 50 years the disappointment of a Call declined. Turning to its resources and ingenuity the congregation suggests that some very dear and trusted men of the congregation serve as a kind of "ad hoc pulpit committee" to audit a sermon — (something quite foreign to the congregation's way of doing the business of a Call) — preached by a particularly outstanding candidate in the Midwest. The men, who are to be in attendance at an LLL International Convention at a location near the candidate's church, are given an "unofficial commission" for their task. Without the preacher's knowledge the men worship and listen and learn and leave quite pleased with themselves at the inconspicuous manner in which they have carried off this "holy eavesdropping". In less than an hour one of the men discovers that a raincoat and camera have been left beneath the pew in which they were sitting. The pastor must be contacted, the church opened, and the precious articles retrieved. Although their "cover has been blown" a Call is extended to the man due in part to their favorable impressions... He declines.

With the youngest President in the nation's history leading in the White House, Concordia turns to a young pastor serving in Vallonia, Indiana, the Rev. Edward F. Meyer, a native of Iowa. He accepts the Call and together with his wife Melba (a former parochial school teacher) and two sons assumes the pastorate at Concordia. The Installation Service is conducted March 4, 1962 with Pastor Leonard preaching the sermon assisted by area pastors Raymond Witt and John Roock. It is a bitter-sweet day for the congregation; bitter because of the pain still experienced at the sudden death of their former pastor and the memories associated with his pastoring and his passing; sweet because of the promise of God carried so gently in the person of Pastor Meyer... "our Pastor."



Installation Service—Pastor Edward F. Meyer

Beginning his tenure of a little more than ten years at Concordia, Pastor Meyer performs his first work of love by conducting the morning service March 11, with a message on "Working Together for the Lord". This Sunday is also the first in the Season of Lent and this evening God's family Concordia comes together for a quiet hour to ponder the theme, "Lent, — Its Meaning For Our Lives".

With this new beginning at home Concordia again both reflects change and rises to meet dramatic change through appropriate changes of its own in methods of operation and administration. A number of "firsts" are recorded. Replacing the willing volunteers for part-time secretarial work, a regular secretary is hired to assist in the work load which naturally falls upon the shoulders of a pastor in a large congregation with extensive properties and community involvements. The "Concordia Newsletter" is first published in May, 1962. A Parish Planning Program is initiated as a guide to coordinating congregational activities and creating new and necessary programs. The procedure for Communion announcement is once again adapted to the changing lifestyles within the congregation and cards placed in the offering plate during the gathering of the offerings replace the telephone calls. The Rite of Confirmation is shifted from a Palm Sunday emphasis to Pentecost Sunday with its unique message of newness, power and witness. A New Constitution and By-law recommenda-

tions limiting the terms of office held by members is suggested and passed, and other necessary up-dates are made. The Newton-Conover School System opens a Junior High School and Concordia votes to discontinue its 7th and 8th grades. A Couples Club is formed and a Two-year-old Sunday School class is offered. As these changes are affecting the internal life of the congregation, the assassination of President Kennedy in November of 1963 and the "shaking of the foundations" which this tragedy seems to both foreshadow and create has an ironic counterpart in old Concordia Park. The great beams of the "temple" are rotting!

In correspondence between the Building Committee Chairman, Walter Brady and the architect, attention is brought as early as August 1961 to an alarming deterioration of the exposed portion of the beams. Mr. Brady writes: "Just recently as our church officers were making an inspection of our church properties they noticed that there is some decay starting on the laminated beams which support the roof leading over the walkway from the main church building to the Sunday School section." And again two months later Mr. Brady writes: "After writing to you regarding the laminated beams at our church I understand that a representative from the company which made these beams has been by and made an inspection. He said that he would discuss this with you and see what we might be able to do. We are wondering if he has done so and if either of you have any suggestions for us." No one panics, at least not on the surface, but concern escalates every time a new spot or raised sliver appears on the great beams. The architect seems to

drag his feet, the contractor is reluctant to act without a clear word from the architect and each responsible party professes either innocence of responsibility or ignorance of remedy and each day the situation worsens. The object of such great pride suddenly becomes the source of deep concern. One can easily imagine the frightening thoughts running through the minds of the congregation and particularly its leaders... without the beams the entire roof collapses... one half a million dollars... nobody has any answers... how long will it even be safe... its embarrassing — all this magnificence with beams that are rotting! Architects from State Universities bring their classes to the church to point out the folly of improper wood treatment and dramatically push screwdrivers or knives deep into the dying wood. Senator Barry Goldwater has publicly expressed his views on fanaticism and moderation; his opponent President Lyndon B. Johnson has promised a quick and peaceful resolution of the Vietnam situation in which hundreds of young Americans have been killed and in Alabama thousands have marched from Selma to Montgomery on behalf of equal opportunity and equal treatment under the law before an answer to the decaying beams is discovered. A mixture of various components — among them concrete and wood preservative — is forced under high pressure deep into the heart of each beam to both stabilize the wood and strengthen the load-bearing supports. It is a grateful group of congregational leaders that sees the copper roof once again on solid foundation and the building literally "redeemed".



With the stability of the building once again assured, Concordia can turn its attention to strong signs of stability within the congregation's life and family. Mr. Gilbert Pingel is recognized in 1964 for his 25 years in the teaching ministry and Mr. Claude Schell is honored for 50 years of service to the Sunday School the following year. A Summer recreation program is offered under the guidance of Teacher Roger Thusius and Mr. Steve Hughey, a son of the congregation and student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. is assigned as a summer field worker. This summer field work experience is translated into a full year "vicarage" program which the congregation initiates in 1966 to assist the pastor and provide necessary experience for Seminary students. Mr. Robert Kriger is assigned as Concordia's first Vicar. Across the street the congregation is gladdened by a school remodeling project and by the sight of a bright orange school bus which is entered into service and at the same time saddened by the leaving of Mr. Pingel and Mr. and Mrs. Thusius who accept calls to other schools.

"Ebenezer Year" is observed in 1967 by Concordia. The 6,000 congregations of Synod set a goal of dramatically increasing contributions to foreign missions. For perhaps the first time in its history Synod fails to meet or even approximate its Ebenezer goal despite a sensitive approach to personal participation. This failure is at the moment difficult to interpret but can be seen in retrospect as symptomatic. A nation and church deeply troubled by the maelstrom of social unrest and a sense of events and movements careening out of control reflects its anxiety in a closing spirit, an increasingly conservative and isolationist attitude and a disappointing offering.

Concern for the tradition is increased as Synod's youth movement, the "Walther League" is reoriented and gradually fades from view. The loss of the Walther League which has given Concordia's leadership many happy moments, an introduction to congregational life and leadership, as well as marriage partners, is seen by many as a "scuttling" of our youth program and creates much pain and anger. Disillusionment and confusion are added when the International LLL is urged to politicize by some of its leadership and express itself in dramatic social action.

Meanwhile, the Synod's seminaries at St. Louis and Springfield are under attack by special interest groups within the Synod and an entire nation is confused by "credibility gaps" and made cautious by a "crisis of confidence."

Concordia continues to experience change as a "new faculty" begins the Fall school term, Mr. James Lange, Principal and teachers, Donald Reder, Sandra Wojahn, Elaine Sipe and Betty Spencer. Three Sundays in October are set aside to observe the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation and as these services are led by Pastor Meyer and the new Vicar, Louis Beyer, the congregation



*Pastor Meyer, Alverta Rockett, Horace Isenhower,
—a quarter century of ministry*

sings with new insight the old hymn of Luther, "Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word."

Concordia is ninety years old in 1968 and special observances in April led by two "sons of the congregation", The Rev. George Mennen and The Rev. Larry Lineberger, aid the congregation in its remembrance and hope. Concordia gathers by families to produce its first pictorial directory and as a family to honor Horace J. Isenhower, Sr., for more than 25 years of service to the Sunday School. Again, Concordia needs, as does the entire country, a strong sense of "family". The events of 1968 — the assassinations of presidential candidate, Robert Kennedy, and civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, 10,000 American deaths in Viet Nam, campus bombings and unrest, The Democratic Convention in Chicago which spills into mob violence in the streets — increase the country's anxiety and hasten the conclusion that every national institution is either ineffective or out of control.



F. W. "Beck" Moehlmann—organist over 40 years



Concordia Kindergarten, 1962



*'62 Kindergarten Class,
Confirmation Day, 1971*



*'62 Kindergarten Class,
Senior Year*

As institutions and organizations are challenged in their validity and effectiveness The Catawba Valley witnesses an historic first as Lutherans of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), The American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS) join to form the Catawba Valley Lutheran Fellowship. This organization for the first time in local history brings the nearly 30,000 Lutherans of the area into an organization for fellowship, education, worship and corporate action. When one considers the hurt and suspicion with which these groups had regarded one another and the angry controversy — much of it swirling around Concordia — in which many of the local congregations were born, the common sense of purpose, of heritage and confession which this organization represents, offers a welcome alternative to the brokenness which marks much of American Society. The inaugural speaker for the Fellowship is Dr. John Tietjen, President of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri an articulate spokesman for an open, creative, confessional Lutheranism. He and Dr. J. A. O. Preus who is elected President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in 1969 are to become the two principals in a Synodical conflict that will afflict the Synod and affect Concordia for the next decade.

Throughout this period 1960 to 1970, Concordia like other institutions representing stability and continuity is bombarded from the outside by pressures and movements of radical change. As a congregation there is a growing tension between change which is encouraged as creative and necessary and change which is perceived as crude novelty mongering or cheap, useless "change for the sake of change." Concordia gathers to sing the refrain, "Change and Decay in all around I see . . . O Thou who changest not, abide with me," with greater conviction and a rising feeling of anxiety.

These external forces, however, mask *internal* change which although less obvious is even more dramatic! Concordia is being transformed from within and is only vaguely aware of the depth of this quiet shaking and reshaping of its personality.

Concordia is growing older — the average age is rising with each passing year. Shut-ins are added to the list of the pastor's Communion calls day by day. The number of baptisms begins to drop — slowly, but surely. More and more youth leave for college or for work in another location and do not return to Catawba County. Sunday School attendance slowly dips and year by year the attendance at worship declines. The once large Adult Bible Study Class in the rear of the Sanctuary, a point of great pride slowly, but surely begins to dwindle. The number of hospitalized begins to grow with the age of the congregation.

The strong family center of the congregation is beginning to break up. More and more mothers join the public work force. Families begin to drift without a common purpose, center or an agreed upon lifestyle. Divorce, once virtually unheard of within the congregation becomes slowly and painfully a fact of life for the people of Concordia. Counseling needs begin to mount as the network of family support begins first to stretch and then break.

Congregational life is changing as choices increase. The factories that create a better economic life also create opportunities for more and longer vacations, weekend escapes and recreation alternatives. The minds and leadership that manage the factories also create a demand for weekend business trips and markets and are preoccupied by exciting new worlds of pleasure and recreation. The addition of new members from the "outside" introduces a transition from members as friends to members as strangers. The congregation is no longer looked to as a center for social contacts and activities. Worship is considered less a "holy obligation" and more a weekly option. More affluent members expect more service from an increasing budget while contributing less to the congregation as a spiritual resource. Fewer members work harder as the voters' lists shrink and the congregational assemblies attract fewer and fewer.

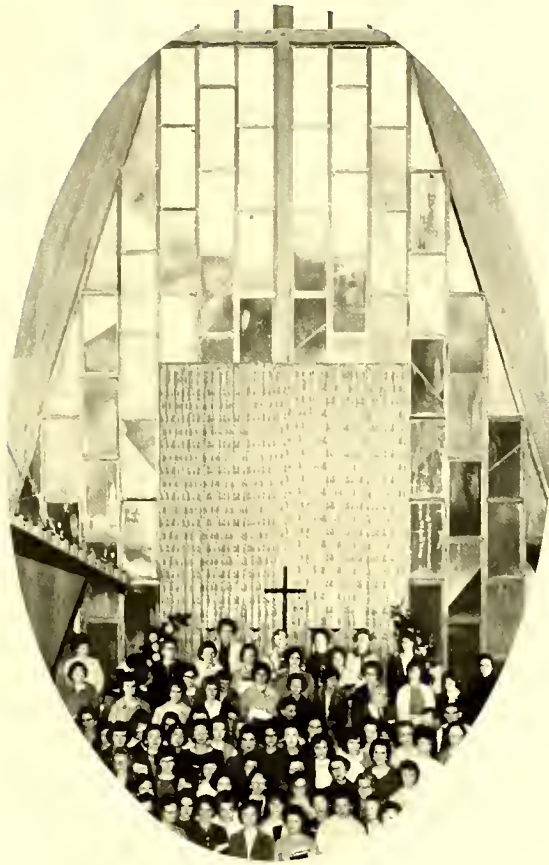
Once again, Concordia, though "tucked away" from the great movements and dramatic decision-making centers of the nation, is a mirror image of the larger Church. Concordia is quietly becoming a victim of its own success.

With the possible exception of dramatic persecution, Concordia has faced virtually every hardship a congregation can encounter — homelessness, schism, disappointment, embarrassment, criticism, poverty and death. As a congregation it has lost its parent body, its reputation, its school, its college and its pastors. Through each of these Concordia has more than merely survived, it has overcome and in overcoming it has sheltered, nursed, comforted, led, rallied and educated the community and church around it. Concordia is now called upon once again to *remember*, for its identity and ministry are threatened by an enemy as strong and more subtle than anything it has yet faced. The enemy is *success* — precisely that which the congregation and its leaders have worked so hard to attain in their personal lives and in their life together. Concordia's history in the next years will be written in its struggle to "Do this in remembrance of Me!"





Chapter XIV



The true test of character is not so much in how one handles failure or manages adversity, but how one deals with success.



Concordia has done everything right. We have followed almost verbatim the "Protestant Ethic" script — industry, honesty, frugality — and we have thrown in a few wrinkles of our own — creativity, daring and a sense of humor. This agenda for securing success and divine blessing was written in flashes of brilliance and belligerence in the 16th Century Protestant Reformation and refined for two centuries on the frontiers of the United States. If followed the Protestant ethic agenda promises entrance into a mythical experience described vaguely as "The American Dream." The people of Concordia are evidence that the "Dream" — unlike religious nirvanas and political utopias — is *real*. Life is better in the "Dream" — we live longer, we are more comfortable, we have more leisure, we see more interesting sights, we eat more exotic foods, we experience more sensational feelings. And yet the "Dream" is a *disappointment*. The disillusionment occurs not because the dream is a mirage. It is real and attainable just as the script promised. But when we have entered into and touched the warm pulsating edges of this living legend, it does not satisfy; it has no purpose; it has no meaning.

Concordia is learning the dark side of this made in America myth. We are learning that the satisfaction, the sense of fulfillment, the meaning, the flow of energy that says, "I am alive" is in the *doing*, the *seeking*, the *striving*, the *creating*. We are learning that "merely" enjoying is temporary, shallow, dead-ended, pointless. We are learning the truth of the philosopher's lament, "man is condemned to meaning." We are learning the challenge of our Creator "man is destined to create." We are learning again that our Master in saying, "Follow Me!" is *not leading nowhere!* He is calling daily to a purpose a destiny which does not end in retirement nor merely occupy

holy space. He is calling through the "hidden discipline" of Baptism to daily take up my cross and follow Him. He is calling to continuing creativity, to constant renewal/repentance, to intentional aggressive discipleship which moves with gentleness and respect into the world of the lost, the lonely, the crushed and confused.

The true test of character is not so much in how one handles failure or manages adversity, but how one deals with success. This is true of organizations and institutions as it is of individuals. Success hurls into the teeth of its owner temptations to pride, to self-satisfaction, to self-indulgence, to self-righteousness. Success is pictured as a fat, squinty-eyed man lapped in careless luxury, coldly tossing crumbs and bones to a hungry world. Wrap this man in a monk's cowl and there emerges a popular picture of the institution church in the '60s and '70s. This distortion described few if any serious congregations or church bodies during this period and certainly would describe only a lie about a very successful Concordia. And yet the congregation like the church and society around it is caught by forces it cannot understand tossed by movements it cannot control. It is confused, indecisive, cautious, disillusioned and angry. But Concordia is more — much more. This family of God which pauses each week to gather beneath the three great crosses is a *family of faith*; it is intensely loyal and deeply faithful. In a society which — like some mad ship's captain — has smashed the compass, torn away the wheel, bashed holes in the hull and then curses the ship because it is out of control — Concordia must now "see through the glass darkly" and catch the hints and guesses for which sane leaders and caring institutions search.

A "parsonage" is the site of many high-level conferences between a pastor and his Lord. Concordia's beautiful new parsonage, built and dedicated in April of 1968, is no exception. Pastor Meyer plans and prays over the dilemma facing Concordia. The general feeling within the congregation given the agony of society is generally good; but the number of willing workers is shrinking. The Communicant and Baptized membership grows each year; but each year also sees worship attendance dropping. More Bible Study opportunities are offered; but fewer take advantage of them. The lament of long-time members, "I don't know anyone in the congregation anymore," if overstated is keenly felt. Although blessed with Vicars like Dennis Quackenboss, 1968, and John Sandstrom, 1969, who devote much energy and ability to the youth, there is a feeling that the young people are drifting through the congregation without real engagement or involvement. There is only a bare handful of men under the age of 30 on the Voters' Assembly roster. The rising needs and expectations of the shut-ins, the hospitalized, the elderly, the troubled and broken, the youth and the daily administration of parish business leave little time for dealing pastorally with anything but symptoms. The causes of the congregational malaise remain virtually untouched.

It is 1970. We have taken as a nation the "one small step for man — the giant leap for mankind." The "Silent Majority" is beginning to assert itself and between the gains achieved in the area of Civil Rights and a promised resolution of the Vietnam conflict, there seems some reason to believe we are regaining control of our destiny as a nation. Concordia is remembering from where it came and for what it is created. The Word is searched in a number of small group Bible studies in member's homes. Led by the Pastor and Vicar Douglas Corniels the number of groups is increased to six. A "Welcome Committee" created to identify and greet the "stranger within the gates" begins to work its warmth. The Evangelism Committee is reactivated and education for home visitation is offered by the Pastor. License plates identifying the Congregation are sold. An Architectural firm is engaged to research projected needs and develop a master plan for future building development.

The next year is again representative of both Concordia's struggle and its efforts to reverse a trend. A *Service League* made up primarily of younger women is created as counterpoint and alternative to the existing women's groups. No birth is without its travail and the Service League reflects a mild protest on the part of some against the formalized structure of the other groups and the parent groups' blessings are withheld for a number of years. A long-range planning committee created in 1965 and consisting of Joe Kaylor, Stine Isenhower, Martha Holland, Jean Sigmon, Christine Isenhower, Gilbert Pingel, Jerome Bolick, and Pastor Meyer completes part of its work as construction begins on Phase I of an addition which will provide an all-purpose room, a

library, office space, youth complex and Sunday School rooms. The ambivalence with which Concordia faces its mission and ministry is in part reflected in the promotional materials done to inspire and inform the members with regard to the new addition. The materials, very attractively done, use words of Jesus, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" as a theme for building. These words direct Christ's Church toward a dramatic servant-style *in the world*. The new addition although needed is designed not primarily towards service to the world but almost exclusively for the comfort, the convenience and the ministry *within the congregation*.

The small-group Bible studies are begun again and together His people study the Word. A new series of Sunday School materials, "Mission-Life", are introduced and almost immediately criticized by most and discarded by some. A special appeal is made in the community to a Special Education Sunday School Class for the mentally handicapped; a class formed for the congregation and community two years earlier. A new school staff is introduced with Betty Spencer as interim Principal, and Deborah Roesener, Janet Sauer, and Mervin Munster as teachers. Mrs. Spencer is to serve well and faithfully for six years although at the time many see this as a "holding operation."

A first in the form of a Youth Folk Service is conducted in a special "discreet" 8:30 Sunday Morning time period. This folk service is symptomatic again of the tension between a style of worshipping, educating, witnessing and interpreting that has been consistent for three generations and a world both outside and within the congregation that either cannot understand or will not hear the Church's message cast in its traditional forms.



"Picnic under the oaks"

The struggle to regain a sense of purpose and mission within the congregation mirrors a much larger struggle within American Christianity and leads to some sharp questions and dramatic answers in the larger religious sphere. The questions, "why does the church seem so powerless?" and "from where did the early church gain its dynamism?" lead to some interesting and unsettling conclusions in the nation's churches. The Scriptures direct through the promises of Jesus to the Holy Spirit as the power for life and witness. From this search for knowledge and the desire for an experience of God's power two movements emerge: one is a quiet return to study, prayer, reflection and intentional discipleship; the other is marked by fanaticism, mysticism, and an exploitation of the miraculous, the dramatic and the bizarre. Because both movements spring from the conviction that the Holy Spirit is God's power source and because they both speak of personal regeneration and congregational renewal they are lumped together under a general heading of "Charismatic." Though this unequal yoking of the two movements is unfair it is predictable in times which are already confused and where new movements seem to consistently reflect the worst of the confusion.

Concordia and the community are troubled by those encounters with the charismatic which are experienced. A focus of this concern within the congregation becomes the Vicar Larry Brakenhoff who is himself struggling through with others the meanings of the Holy Spirit's power and presence. The worst is feared — emotional excesses, an exploitation of youthful energies, undermining of sound doctrine, irrational behavior. With the stakes so high and the outcome so unpredictable it is the best judgement of the congregation's leaders that the kind of authority and respect that a Vicar holds cannot be entrusted to an unstable movement. The Vicar is quietly dismissed. Unfortunately, the effects are not quiet and the reasons for the leadership's concern are difficult to explain. Many members are confused and feel ill informed. It is primarily the youth, however, who are affected. They cannot understand and feel hurt, angry and betrayed by the adult leadership.

The District President, the Rev. Charles S. Mueller is asked to address the congregation on the subject of the Charismatic movements and to offer his guidance as to an appropriate Biblical and Synodical position. The moment passes, but the hurt and misunderstanding remain.

Pastor Meyer has just celebrated his tenth anniversary as Concordia's shepherd when he receives and accepts a Call to Northfield, Minnesota. It is an extremely difficult decision for him as he and his family are well-loved and deeply appreciated both in the congregation and in the community. In addition to his consistent pastoral care he serves as Chaplain to the Conover Volunteer Fire Department made up primarily of Concordia members, and in the District as L.L.L. Pastoral Advisor and as a

member of the Parish Services Committee. If the decision is difficult for Pastor Meyer and his family it is no easier for the congregation. He is the first pastor to take a Call out of the congregation in over fifty years and only the third pastor in the congregation's history to leave the church for any location other than the College. For most of Concordia the pastor is still less a professional and more a member of the family. The loss is felt very deeply.

Pastor Meyer's last sermon as Concordia's pastor is, "A Congregation Alive Unto God" and the service is followed by a quiet dedication of the new addition, July 9, 1972... a most difficult moment once again for Concordia.

The difficulty of this moment, however, is challenged by a new strength within the congregation — aggressive and capable lay leadership! Concordia has always enjoyed outstanding lay support, but the experience of the leadership vacuum at the time of Pastor Lineberger's death together with a better educated, better informed and mixed finally with a more intentionally shared leadership style on the part of Pastor Meyer has produced without question the finest group of leaders in Concordia's history; intelligent, mature, committed, respected. The time without a pastor is further lightened by the retirement and "homecoming" of the Rev. Fred Graef and his wife, Mary Mennen Graef. The Graefs have long intended to make Conover home and these two graduates from "old Concordia College" come home at just the right moment. Pastor Graef's lively style and warm pastoral manner quickly make the vacancy much easier to bear and Sundays something to anticipate.

Nor is the vacancy to be a long one. The first Call extended is to the Rev. Howard J. Patten of Atlanta, Georgia and he accepts. Pastor Patten has served the church in a variety of capacities in the ten years since his ordination. He has served both black and white congregations in rural, urban and suburban areas; as campus pastor, Navy Reserve chaplain, mission developer, and in a variety of ministries to and for youth. In a moment when much main-line church life is directed toward keeping the tradition and organizing efficiently to meet the expectations of constituents, this young pastor's concept of the church seems painfully out of step. His commitment to and passion for the church as a family of ministers, sharing Word and Sacrament for humble, articulate service to the world is viewed by many as strange and by a few as "liberal" and even un-Lutheran. At this point in its history Concordia is old, wise, somewhat weary and necessarily cautious. Its pastor-elect is young, inclined to recklessness and brimming with energy. To a casual observer, it would appear the two — congregation and pastor — are on a collision course. But what this casual observer could not see is the depth of faithfulness to Christ which holds and shapes both pastor and people; a faithfulness which will mark and manage the years of struggle and growth ahead. Pastor Patten is installed on a rainy Sunday after-



The Rev. Howard J. Patten

noon November 19, 1972, and the congregation opens its heart to him, his wife, Marilyn, and infant daughter, Alycia, and again this moment reflects the warmth of Concordia as it embraces both its former pastor and its new shepherd in a love which is undivided. For the first time in its history, Concordia invites pastors of the A.L.C. and L.C.A. to share in the liturgy of Installation. It is perhaps significant that the sermon theme for the first exercise of pastoral responsibility in the Thanksgiving Eve Communion liturgy is "With Hearts Wide Open!", Romans 12.

A most happy moment calls the people of Concordia together early in 1973 in a Service of Thanksgiving and Prayer for Peace at the signing of an armistice in Viet Nam January 27, 1973. One of the first items on the New Year's agenda is the calling of a Minister of Christian Education. This office, a first for Concordia, is designed to both fill out work formerly done by vicars and provide a necessary continuity for youth and education in the congregation. Mr. Alan Gunderman, M.C.E., in Boca Raton, Florida, is called, accepts and is installed May 6. Mr. Gunderman's Installation is combined with an open house for the community to both share the joy of a new minister and gratitude to God for the new facility. The year continues to be one of joy and new ministries as Pastor Graef is asked to assist Concordia in Bible study, preaching and shut-in visitation.

Three new ministers lead the congregation on September 9, in the celebration of the 95th Anniversary of Concordia. In a special Education Festival the following Sunday, a day marking 95 years from the opening of Concordia College doors, Dr. Alvin Schmidt, a Missouri Synod pastor on the faculty of Lenoir-Rhyne College, leads the congregation in a renewal of its commitment to sound Christian education. Only a month later on Reformation Sunday more than 100 members of the congregation gather in the Emmaus Room to form home Bible study groups and commit themselves to a deepened mutual responsibility for the Word at Concordia.

Concordia experiences some new dimensions and practices in its liturgy; banners for each season of the year are created by special committees and grace the sanctuary along with a large Christ candle and processional cross; Communion vestments — the alb and chasuble — as well as the chanting of the Communion service are introduced, along with other ancient traditions of the Lutheran confession, such as the midnight Christ Mass, the Office of Tenebrae on Good Friday, the Baptismal Liturgy in the Easter Sunrise Service and Advent Services. Communion services are increased to two each month and a sermon series on Baptism and the Lord's Supper focus the congregation's attention on its sacramental privileges and responsibilities. A series of Bible studies on the Augsburg Confession is lead by Pastor Patten and a twelve-week course on evangelism and personal witness is offered evenings.

Although the year is a good one marked by excitement and sound new beginnings, it is also marred by growing doctrinal discord within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and strong indications that opposing views are headed toward some kind of showdown. The Fall of the year becomes a time for a totaling of congregational liabilities in the meeting of the Nominating Committee. As the committee pores over the list of those available for election to office in 1974, less than fifty out of more than 800 communicants can be listed. The Nominating Committee's experience dramatizes both the deep commitment of a few and the necessity of extending involvement and a sense of responsibility to the larger membership. Only a few weeks later when less than forty out of 160 members of the congregation respond to an invitation from the Stewardship Board to serve as visitors in the Fall Stewardship Program, Pastor Patten takes his concerns directly to the congregation. Setting aside both the First Sunday in Advent liturgy and formal vestments, the pastor steps into the midst of the congregation to challenge Christ's church Concordia with the words of Revelation 3, "You are neither hot nor cold... because you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'How rich I am! and, How well I have done. I have everything I want.' In fact, but you do not know it, you are... blind and naked. I tell you, 'Buy from me gold refined in the fire, to make you truly rich

and white clothes to put on to hide the shame of your nakedness and ointment for your eyes that you may see. All whom I love, I reprove and discipline. Here I stand knocking at the door; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and we shall eat together. To him who is victorious, I will grant a place on my throne..."

This moment of confrontation is a painful one for pastor and congregation: reactions range from deep appreciation to embarrassed amusement to anger. The Sunday signals among other things the beginning of a series of confrontation/conflict/resolution/growth experiences which are to touch virtually every area of congregational life. Needless to say this departure from tradition also signals the end of any "honeymoon" period that existed for the new pastor and Concordia.

Feelings, opinions, experiences and traditions collide once again in February of 1974, as the Synodical controversy explodes into open schism. Forty professors and 400 students of the largest Lutheran Seminary in the world, Concordia, St. Louis, Missouri, move physically into an "exile" they feel has already been imposed upon them theologically and academically. The anger, fear and distrust which have been burning for years between a progressive Lutheranism which sees the Biblical and doctrinal confession of the denomination as always in process and a traditionalist Lutheranism which understands the mission of the church body to be a steadfast adherence to the historic forms and confessional style of the past reduce to ashes all bridges of dialogue. A "Seminary in Exile" is formed and Concordia Congregation which has in its history been scarred by flames both physical and philosophical is touched by the conflagration.

Pastor Patten's voice is choked with emotion as he announces news of the "exile" the following Sunday. The congregation is stunned, confused and dismayed by what appears to be but one more act of rebellion on the part of "intellectuals" and students who have been disturbing society for more than a decade. The leaders of "Seminex" — later to become Christ Seminary — have both seriously underestimated the distance between Seminary classroom and church pew and failed to understand the deep need of society and the church for stability and order.

Any simple summary of the positions in conflict is inadequate and a two-line explanation of tensions which have grown and moved, twisted and torn the church body for a generation is unfair. And yet two shibboleths of the Reformation, both Lutheran and both true, may provide some feel for what each party represented and for which it was literally willing to die. "Ecclesia Reformata semper reformanda est" — "The Church of the Reformation is always reforming!" If this banner-line is

a fair description of the energy flow of the "moderate movement", then Luther's ringing declaration, "Here I Stand!" defines the parameters within which the "conservative" group felt the denomination must live. At Concordia as well as in most of Synod the issues and words are crushed beneath the weight of support for constituted authority; although authority itself is wounded in the battle. Appeals for support are made to Synodical Lutherans of the area and an organization of Lutherans supportive of the administration's position is formed with Concordia serving as a rallying point and host to a number of spokesmen and gatherings encouraging the traditionalist position. Although quiet political activity continues in the "Valley" for almost five years the crisis passes and, with the exception of the pastor's personal anguish, only a residue of cynicism toward Synodical authority and concern regarding Pastor Patten's Synodical loyalty remain.

The year which began in pain continues as Pastor Graef is disabled by a number of small strokes and despite surgery is incapacitated to the point where he can no longer serve as visitation pastor.

If the open break in Synod and the questions surrounding the use and abuse of authority in the church leave much of Concordia confused about and uncomfortable with authority which seems at times petulant and arbitrary, the events of August render finally "all" authority suspect. President Richard M. Nixon is forced to resign as the final chapter of the Watergate break-in and scandal. Suddenly, in the space of little more than six months, the two cornerstones of Concordia's confidence in the temporal order are crushed as authority both ecclesiastical and executive disappoint and embarrass. The congregation like much of the nation is forced into the impossible position of simultaneously demanding authority and distrusting it.

In September Bill Price, a good friend of the congregation, and husband of Hilda Spencer Price, a member of Concordia, dies suddenly of a heart attack. Pastor Patten participates in the funeral service at Woodlawn Baptist Church; a participation which represents an almost dramatic departure from Concordia's fellowship practice with other Christian denominations.

Event piles upon event as Martin McRee, one of the sound and gentle leaders of the congregation, is seriously wounded in an attempted robbery of the Savings and Loan Company he manages. The following Sunday Kirk Andrew Patten, the Patten's infant son, and Tamara Annette Price, five-year old daughter of the Prices, are received into the family of Christ through Holy Baptism. Five weeks later Tammy is struck and killed by the Concordia School bus on her way home from school. Waves of pain and care sweep through the community and church surrounding Hilda, a granddaughter of Concordia's original land donors and her two sons, Billy and Alex. This second tragedy to strike the Price family in two months thrusts upon the congregation once again

the need to examine its tradition as the Board of Elders decides to invite Woodlawn's pastor to assist in the funeral liturgy. Almost a century of a tradition, "Lutheran Pastors in Lutheran Services" is challenged, examined and understood in a necessarily new and more pastoral perspective.

As if the events of 1974 were not troublesome and tragic enough in themselves, these days are lived against the backdrop of one of the worst economic recessions since the great "Depression." Financial concerns cut into area industries forcing cut-backs, and lay-offs, which in turn create domestic tension and a general malaise.

Through and in the events of the year Concordia struggles to live its faithfulness and share its faith in the Christ Who is known precisely in the sorrows and conflicts of His people. Wednesday evening rebroadcasts of the Sunday morning services are initiated for the community and most particularly for the congregation's shut-ins who now number over fifty. Concordia hosts a bi-weekly morning Bible Study and Prayer fellowship for Lutheran Pastors as a means of countering the division created by the Synodical tensions. A Sunday School Teachers Institute for area Teachers is held at Concordia and taught by Mr. Gunderman. A Couples' Club is organized for the purpose of strengthening family relationships and courses on "Parenting" are offered to both the congregation and community. Children are invited and encouraged to join the adult members of their family at the communion rail; there to receive an affirmation of their Baptismal blessing. Twice-a-year Confirmation retreats are conducted as a special learning experience for the youth. An Order of Prayer and Preaching together with the easily sung American "Gospel Songs" is included as a regular third Sunday of the month service, both to give our more formal liturgical services more meaning and depth and to reach the many non-Lutheran visitors who participate in our worship. Outdoor folk communions are celebrated on Sunday evenings beneath the great oaks of the campus. Yearly themes continue with the theme for 1974, "CONCORDIA CARES" having a special meaning within the congregation. The Rev. Margold Harman is engaged as Visitation Pastor upon his retirement after more than twenty years as Pastor of Mount Olive Lutheran, Newton.

A Lenten "Cross Bearers" emphasis on sharing the Good News brings the congregation together for study and devotion in small groups early in 1975. Pocket crosses are given to persons in the community inviting them to share in the power of the Cross.

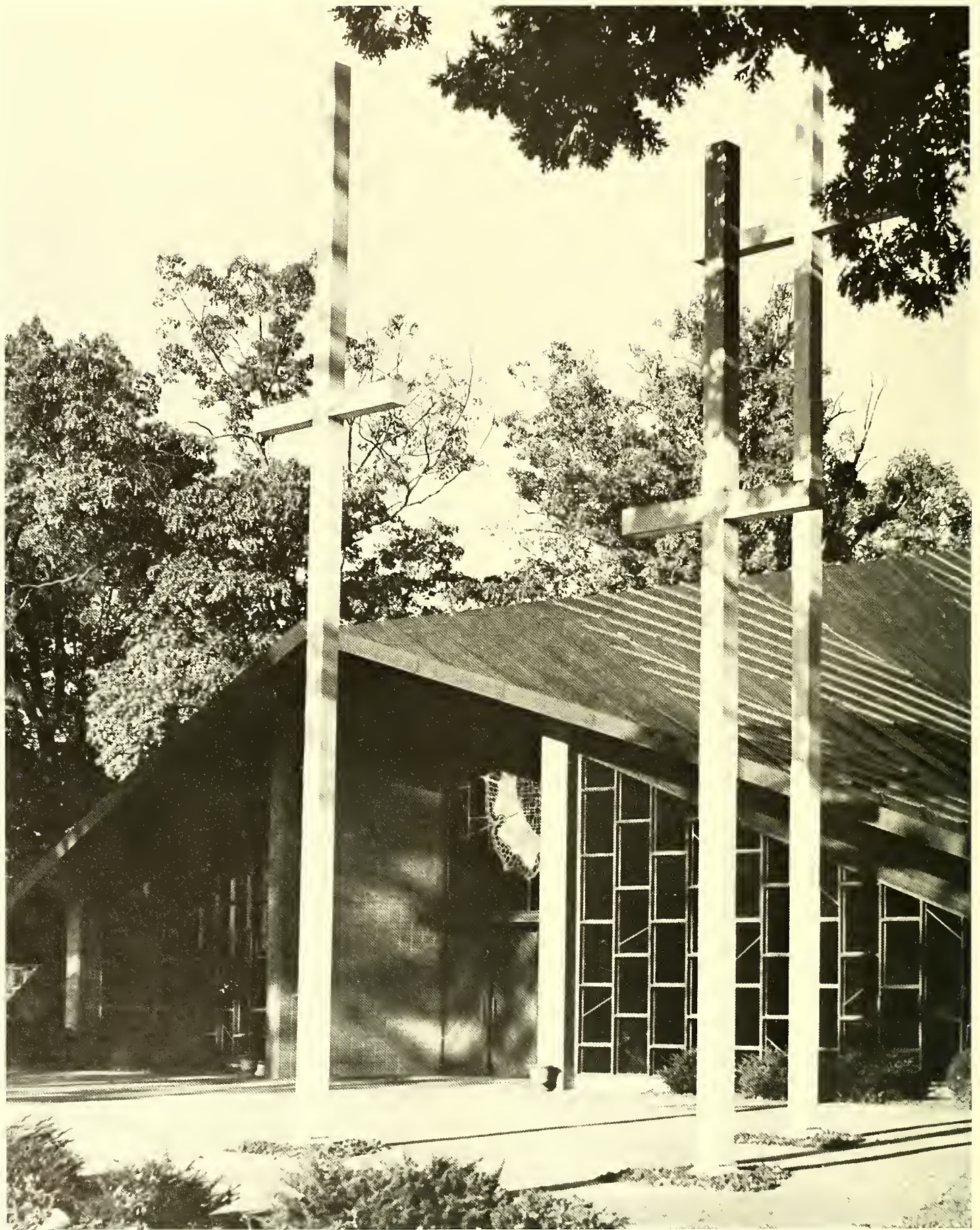
April of the year witnesses the last gasp of this nation's attempt to create a democracy in Viet Nam as Saigon falls. The final days of South Viet Nam create the first days of a phenomenon that is to become familiar and personal to the people of Concordia, thousands of people crammed into hundreds of boats travelling frantically and chaotically in a flotilla to freedom. The "Boat People", refugees to nowhere, become both a symbol of the

failure of modern political systems and a haunting presence of "the least of these my brethren." Concordia responds to the call of Christ through these people and sponsors a number of families with housing, clothing, furniture and houseware, jobs, medical and dental care, all of these given with warm friendship and open hearts. The meaning of Christ's love expressed through His people is perhaps best summed up in a letter written to the congregation by the father of one of these families, Mr. Nguyen Tran:

"Our family TRAN sincerely thanks to the assistance of the Lutheran Church and its members and the U.S. Government that have help my family could set foot in this country. As soon as we arrived at U.S.A. the Church have supplied us housing, food, clothing, furniture and all the things that we need. We felt very emotion deeply. And the other important matter is how can we earn our living. Now the Church has help us to find the job. My wife and I both have the job. As for our children they are now attending to the Church school nearly one month and no charged of fee. We thanks to the congregation they have took their time to bring us to go to the market every week. They are so nice and hospitably that we always remember which the church give us the favor. We would be glad to serve for the Church. When we know the American government admit refugee resettlement in the U.S.A. our family decided to take a dangerous escape from our motherland in order to find the most precious thing "FREEDOM". It took us many days and nights in the wooden, small boat. We endure many hardship and frightful by the storm of the Pacific sea.



San Tran



Under God's blessing we have arrived safely in Malaysia. In my country now is under the cruel regime "Communist". Because of their rules there are no think, speak, right of worship. In spite of the dangers we may meet at the sea, we made up our mind to go to find the FREEDOM. If we are unlucky die at the sea, is better than to live with no Freedom. Though America is composed of people of different ethnic background and culture, but equally to everybody and guarantees the freedom to the people. We feel proud that we can join into the American society. We would work hard to contribute the community. At last we pray and wish America strongest and wealthiest forever. Thank you!"

Because of the unique nature and closeness of their team ministry, Mr. Gunderman and Pastor Patten are asked to present a paper to the Southeastern District Teachers/Pastors Conference under the title, "One Call To One Ministry" and lead the conference in a lively discussion of the Holy Spirit's "chemistry" in team ministry. A new pictorial directory of the congregation is prepared and distributed to all members. The congregation continues to experience significant growth from adult confirmation and transfers into the congregation from other churches. This growth continues also to be viewed as a mixed blessing: excitement and joy that the congregation is growing, mixed with a certain sadness that it is at the same time changing and becoming less familiar. But even as the congregation grows numerically, worship attendance continues to show a slow but perceptible decline. Worship attendance serves as but one indicator of a continuing change in priorities, a shift in allegiances and a search for new ways to discover and create "the good life." At the same time, communion attendance grows and small group Bible study continues to create considerable interest. Baptism becomes more central to worship and in the lives of many worshipers. A series of congregational studies is undertaken by the pastor with the help of the Board of Elders. Some of the more illuminating discoveries are: of the more than 450 identifiable homes related to the congregation, less than 125 homes are "families" in the traditional sense — two parents living at home with the children; less than one-half of the active membership of the congregation have been members more than fifteen years; more than eighty per cent of the offerings are given by approximately twenty per cent of the congregation; one-fourth of the congregation actively and intentionally takes responsibility for ministry and leadership at Concordia — the remainder indicate by word or action that church membership means primarily the desire or need to *be served*. The concern and desire for excellence in ministry continue to be borne by a "remnant."

The Old Church/Gymnasium is repaired, renovated and opened for youth activities. Much of the work is either done or donated by members under the supervision of the B. E. Matthews Construction Company, keeping costs to a minimum. A special evening of reded-



Mr. Alan D. Gunderman, Minister of Christian Education

ication for the old treasure is held in November and "sons of the congregation", the Rev. George Mennen, pastor of Holy Cross, Newton, and Larry R. Lineberger, pastor of Christ, Hickory, bring their fond remembrances of life in the old building; again Concordia "remembers".

The Constitution Committee is activated and begins the difficult and time-consuming task of reworking the Bylaws and Officers' Handbook to both reflect the changes already taking place and create the organizational changes necessary to more effectively serve in the future. The initial results of the Committee's labors are presented in August and the congregation begins to wrestle with the major implications of some far reaching changes. Voting membership and office-holding authority is extended to women and all communicant members age 18 and above; The Board of Elders is increased from nine to twenty — one elder for each fifteen families; All boards are increased dramatically in number thereby creating opportunity for ministry by many more capable leaders and broadening the base of support and involvement in major decisions. These changes and many others including the formation of a Board of Mission and Ministry, — focusing on evangelism, social ministry and foreign missions — are adopted throughout the year 1976.

1976 is the year of the nation's Bicentennial and Concordia joins the community and nation in special observances; among them a pan-Lutheran Colonial English Lutheran Liturgy in historic Old St. Paul's church founded in 1842 at which Concordia's Choir sings and Pastor Patten conducts the liturgy for the day. Sunday, July 4th, the congregation gathers to celebrate and thank God for its freedoms with worship, picnic, games and evening outdoor Communion service. One of the highlights of the day is the Baptism of Linh and Bao Hoang, children of one of the Vietnamese families sponsored by Concordia and students at Concordia School.



"Gil"

Mr. Gunderman whose talents are many is asked to serve as School Principal for the 1976-1977 school year and Mr. Gilbert Pingel returns to Concordia after a ten-year ministry in New Jersey. Mr. Pingel and Mrs. Shirley Klenke are installed as teachers for the year replacing Debbie Roesener and Mervin Munster who received calls to other schools. Mrs. Sandra Smith begins serving as the first full-time School Secretary adding much to the efficiency of the school and relieving the Principal of a great deal of detail and paper work.

A Wednesday morning Ladies' Bible Study begins and home Bible study groups continue to meet at intervals throughout the year. The counselling needs within the congregation make it necessary to pass a resolution in the Board of Elders that with the exception of emergencies the Pastor will accept no counselling outside the church membership. It is sad but necessary action and again serves as a commentary on the needs of both community and congregation.

January 30, 1977 marks a special day for both Concordia and Conover as the congregation hosts a 100-year celebration for the community of Conover. Some amusing disagreements had existed between citizens and community leaders on the date of the town's incorporation by the State, but the good-natured dilemma is resolved when Pastor Patten produces copies of the Articles of Incorporation and January, 1877 is fixed as the date the Community was first recognized officially by the State. An afternoon of fellowship for Conoverites is

sponsored by the people of Concordia and a large selection of pictures, newspaper clippings, period clothing, tools and other memorabilia spanning the 100 years are displayed. Women's groups from the congregation serve refreshments to the many guests and a continuous showing of movies taken during the past thirty years becomes a happy center of attraction.

In an attempt to include and better serve our Senior Citizens, the Service League initiates Christmas and Easter banquets for the members of the congregation seventy-five years and older and Mrs. Margie Bowman begins taking tapes of the Sunday morning services to many of our shut-ins. These two programs are merged into one shut-in ministry under the direction of the Service League and a special bond develops between this women's group and the older members of the congregation.



Concordia's Senior Citizens after Service League banquet

The youth of the congregation adopt a project to provide personal copies of the Scriptures for distribution in India. This "Project Phillip" program exceeds its \$2,500 goal.

Expanding its ministry to the larger community Concordia votes to join with other churches of the area in the Eastern Catawba Co-operative Christian Ministry. The ECCCM marshalls the corporate resources of member churches and focuses this assistance in many areas of human need.

In July Concordia surprises its pastor on his fifteenth anniversary of Ordination. Pastor Larry Lineberger, a classmate of Pastor Patten, leads in the morning liturgy and in a renewal of ordination vows. Later the pastor writes to the congregation, "...for me 15 years as pastor is a real miracle of God's Grace. I thank you for helping me to see His Grace and acknowledge my own deep need as person and as pastor once again. Your thoughtfulness and love made an otherwise routine day in the Kingdom (as if there is ever a routine day in His Kingdom) and a minor marker in my own life, truly a day of great significance, deep joy and loud thanksgiving. One other thought worth sharing came to me in the anniversary service and has recurred many times since. (I guess seeing a son of the congregation in the pulpit occasioned it

as much as any thing else.) Concordia has good reason to celebrate the pastoral ministry! — for Concordia has had in its 100 year history good and faithful pastors — Yoder, Dau, Bischoff, Mennen, Lineberger, Meyer — good and faithful pastors. I know I saw and experienced something more significant than a mere 15 years. I saw people thanking God for 100 years of Called Servants faithfully ministering with Word and Sacrament, with sacrifice and service to His people Concordia."

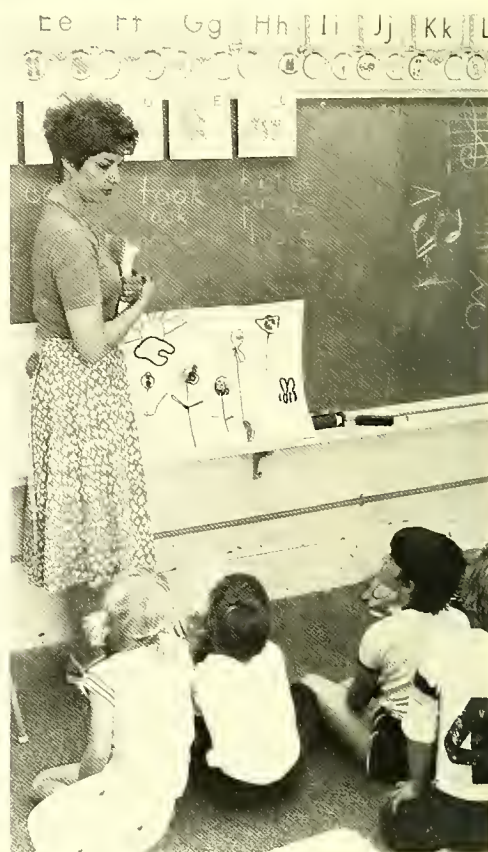
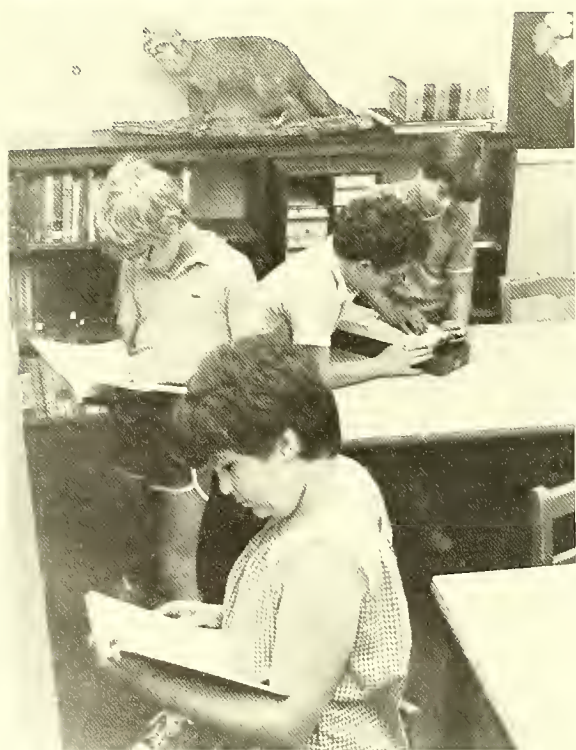
As one minister is recovering from shock another is preparing to leave Concordia. Mr. Gunderman accepts a Call to Houston, Texas and takes with him an experiment in ministry at Concordia, the office of Minister of Education. His leaving is the occasion for sadness, but at the same time another opportunity for evaluation of the ministers and the ministry in the congregation. In his farewell words to the family gathered for Sunday Morning Worship, Mr. Gunderman leaves a bold and blunt challenge: "We will miss you terribly. Many of you have been especially helpful and supportive. The four and one-half years I have spent with you have been frustrating at times but by the Grace of God much more

often rewarding. By the Grace of God it has been a growing experience for me and I think for many of you also . . . I have a word of caution for you. Many of you may be feeling that another pastor is obviously the route to go. Until a majority of this congregation views the professional ministers as ones called to help, train, and educate *all* in the congregation to minister together, rather than ones called to do the ministering for the congregation, another pastor could be just as frustrating an experience. Once a majority of Concordia congregation becomes committed to ministering together then not only will there be a need for an assistant pastor, but also an M.C.E. and both will become financially possible."

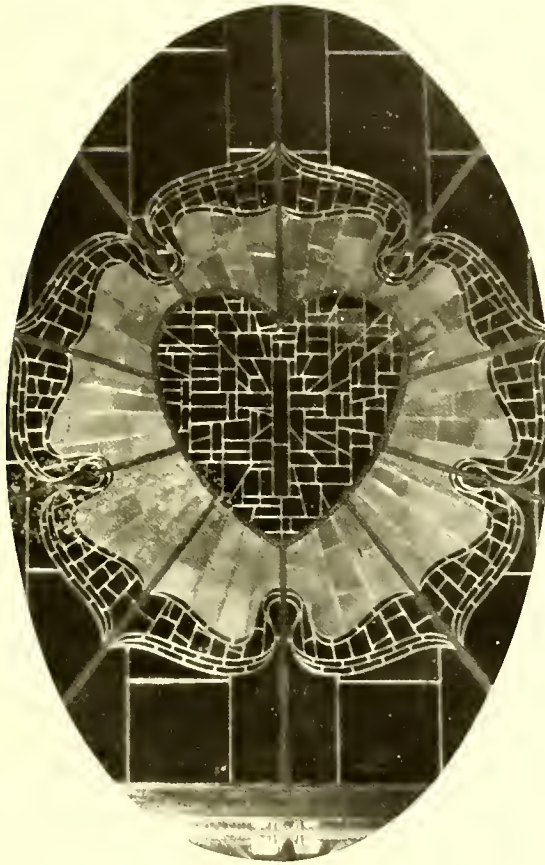
"Al", Beverly — a Christian Day School Teacher who began the ministry of Teacher's Aide in Concordia's School — and their two children leave a void at Concordia, but the emptiness becomes a place of creation as the Spirit of God hovers over His people; calling to Himself not simply a person for professional ministry, but a congregation of ministers — a people of His own equipped for ministry.



A Congregation of Ministers



Chapter XV



Hope is remembering with Praise...



HOPE IS...

Throughout this history we have been speaking of hope as if there were common agreement as to the meaning of hope. This history is not written to provide any textbook definition of hope but it is offered with the prayer that it might lead into *the experience* of hope. This final chapter is a special attempt through record and picture to experience God's gift of hope.

The ancient Greek philosopher saw hope as a dangerous and disappointing flight from reality. Greek mythology pictured hope as the last and greatest ill to escape from Pandora's box. For the Greek mind life was, after all, a tragedy and hope only postponed this necessary realization. Hope inevitably cheated and betrayed. Hope was only for the immature, the shallow, the small-minded. Hope was an illusion in a world all too real.

Over against this tragic vision and the pervasive pessimism which this philosophy created stands the "foolish" faith of the Apostle Paul. Deeply aware of his contemporary's scorn for hope, St. Paul boldly declares that the three greatest adventures in life are love and faith and HOPE. "We are saved by hope" Paul tells the Romans and later in the same epistle prays, "May the *God of Hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing." St. Peter later writes to a congregation in Asia Minor, "We are born through the resurrection to a living hope."

For these men hope is not a wishing, a dreaming, a building of the future around fantasy. Hope is grounded and draws its strength *from the past*. Throughout the Scriptures hope is understood in such a way that it springs not first toward the future, but from the past; a past made memorable by God's forgiveness. *Hope is a gift of God* and grows from a blessed memory. Hope leaps across the chasm separating yesterday and tomorrow bringing strength and meaning to the now.

Today Concordia is challenged to hope. We begin the renewal of hope in our centennial year with a return... a return to our roots of eighty years ago. October 30, 1977, Concordia begins its 100 years of celebration with the anniversary of the dedication of Concordia's first church building, October 31, 1877. The bulletin for the day notes: "Eighty years ago today, Reformation Sunday, 1897, the members of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church gathered with what must have been immense pride, joy and thankfulness for the dedication of their first church building.

The congregation had worshipped in the Concordia College auditorium from its organization in 1878. We can begin to appreciate the thankfulness which filled the new sanctuary when we consider nineteen years of anticipation to this day of dedication.

It is with the same joy, pride and thankfulness that

filled the sanctuary with 'Now Thank We All Our God', eighty years ago, and with the same confidence in the God who is 'A Mighty Fortress' that we begin our centennial celebration this day."

The Rev. O. "Ted" McRee, a graduate of old Concordia College, leads the congregation in its celebration with the theme, "Pressing On From the Past." The liturgy for the day concludes with a recessional to the old church building and a singing there of the dedication hymn of eighty years ago, "Now Thank We All Our God." The first celebration of 100 years would set the stage for all of our centennial observances. Each celebration would be a remembering and hope would spring from each memory.



Claude Scheu, Pastor McRee, Pastor Patten

HOPE IS REMEMBERING...

One can see the miracle of hope springing from remembrance. Too often we look with pity and fear at the elderly, seeing them as imprisoned in the loneliness of blank-faced tomorrows — trapped by the pitiless stare of a present going nowhere. Too often we stand shaken and helpless by what we perceive as shallow, pointless breathing, shadowed, sightless eyes, withered and motionless hands. But if we would draw close to one of these persons for a moment, if we could break through the fear and anxiety about our future, if we would take time to touch and speak, we would see the miracle of hope. If we can hint at a happiness from the past — a friend locked away in memory, an experience, an adventure buried beneath the years, a success almost forgotten — then the "miracle" will happen. At times the miracle fairly explodes in a flood of memory — event tumbling over event. At other times, more often perhaps, the miracle gently warms, soothes and fills the space between us with a slow, deliberate savoring of each precious crumb which the senses serve. The eyes are on fire for a moment; the hands move in harmony with the story and the breathing reaches out for the God of hope who comes unfailingly in the bread and wine of memory — the Body and Blood of His Son. "Do this in remembrance of me." My Heavenly Father remembers... and so do I. Hope is remembering.

It is December 11, 1977, and Concordia remembers a "first" celebration of the Lord's Supper by a small group of people who will become Concordia Congregation, December 7, 1878. The Lenoir-Rhyne College Choir "returns" to the site of its origins and leads the great assembly in worship of the God of hope with chorale tunes and excerpts from Johann Sebastian Bach's "Magnificat". The celebrating and remembering of this Sunday are spread upon the canvas of our Lord's "Parable of the Prodigal Son." In the message of the day, Pastor Patten notes, "This most familiar of parables is most inappropriately called 'The Parable of the Prodigal Son'. The title is inappropriate because it describes only one-half of Jesus' story. There is, you remember, the other brother who has his own story to tell and his own word to hear — 'you are always with me and everything I have is yours'."

"But even if we give the elder brother his place — the footlights in our Lord's drama — yet the parable remains inaccurately titled. The central figure, the 'shaper of the scene' is the father. The subtle shift of the scene from the waiting father to the prodigal son is rather symbolic, even symptomatic of what we so often do in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The center of the Sacrament and the center of life gets displaced. The Prodigal with all of his loneliness, lostness and lowdownness takes center stage. The forgiving Father is left by our minds standing in the wings as if he were only a bit part, a colorful character actor; his word becomes little more than an interesting monologue or casual conversation.

"IN THE STORY WHICH JESUS TELLS, THE WHOLE EVENT DEPENDS UPON THE FORGIVING FATHER AND HIS WORD OF GRACE."



Holy Communion is not shaped first or last by *our* repentance, our sorrow, our good intentions or our confession. We can offer only somberness, only tears, only brokenness. Holy Communion and all of life is to be formed and informed by the Father; by His love, His joy, His acceptance, His power, His promise.

Concordia has celebrated this powerful reality for 100 years. As this Sacrament has focused the life, death and resurrection of the Father's faithful Son in our midst for a century, so this work of the forgiving Father has shaped the seasons and the life of His people, Concordia. When our sorrow would have taken center stage in the Sacrament for the life of this congregation, the Word of the Father has transformed the sorrow for sin into the joy of forgiveness. When our somberness would have set the stage, God's grace has rescued us from the mood of self-depreciation and given us rather the celebration of heaven over the one sinner who repents. When our brokenness and poverty would have described the final curtain, this Means of Grace has pulled us out of self-pity and self-deception and restored us once again in the healing touch of the forgiving Father's arms.

One hundred years is from the standpoint of eternity, but a breath, but from the limited perspective which we bring, it is a long time. But short time or long time, this centennial celebration of the first Communion is God's time — a time to praise Him that despite all of our efforts to the contrary, *He* is still the center, the shaper and the Spirit of the Sacrament and all of life."



HOPE IS REMEMBERING...

The theme "Hope Is Remembering" is drawn from pages of one of the church's contemporary classics, *The Theology of Hope* by the German theologian, Dr. Jurgen Moltmann. Dr. Moltmann identifies that hope which is able to both face and create the future as grounded in and springing from the church's experience of remembering. This action of the faithful, remembering, is far more than mere nostalgia; it is neither vague nor wistful. It is an intentional powerful experience of remembering *God's mighty acts* in salvation history and His quiet shaping grace in my own history. This hope is a remembering, a tracing with the trembling fingers of my soul the great

mercies of God — Red Sea and Resurrection, Reformation and Reunion. Through these and more memories than can be counted, God's Holy Spirit enfolds my spirit and "brings all things to remembrance." We can again and must dare to hope.



100th Anniversary Baptism

Continuing to trace God's mighty acts, Concordia gathered around the marker event of the first Baptism recorded in the congregation's life, January 24, 1880. The preacher for this day's centennial celebration is the Rev. Gerhardt Wagner, pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, Wellington, Ohio. Pastor Wagner is a son of Concordia Congregation, a graduate of Concordia College and a son of Mr. Arthur Wagner, sexton at Concordia for a generation. Pastor Wagner's theme for the sermon, "Heavenly Blessings To Those Who Meet Jesus At The Font" are celebrated in the baptism renewal of each worshipper and in the experience of the Baptism of Christopher Sean, infant son of Steven and Anita (Deal) Speagle. Worship notes for the day remember, "the identity of the baptized may be lost in history with only the note in the Rev. R. A. Yoder's diary 'had a congregational meeting in the chapel — not many present — read the constitution, etc. After sermon I baptized Mr. Hollar's child — Corda Alda Hollar — my first baptism.' Although the identity of the first person to be baptized may be unknown to us, the name that is through Holy Baptism written in the Lamb's Book of Life identifies a person and a personality, a life and a history which is held in the mind and heart of God." The baptismal liturgy created from the best of our traditions by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship is introduced on this Sunday and this marriage of the best of the old tradition and the best of contemporary liturgy serves as an excellent matrix for remembering.

The Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod returns for a fortieth anniversary convention to the place of its birth, Concordia, Conover, North Carolina, in April of 1978. The opening convention Communion liturgy is hosted by Concordia Congregation and once again as 39 years earlier Concordia is a good and gracious host. The laughter of delegate appreciation greets a reading of excerpts from Mother

Moehlmann's letter of almost 60 years earlier and visions of a floor covered with custards and chicken bones lends warmth and humanness to a space-age gathering. It seems entirely fitting that the District from South Carolina to Delaware should gather in Concordia's one hundredth year to make this year of celebration even more exciting.



Southeastern District Convention

Centennial celebrations continue marking special moments in the congregation's history on Easter, on Cantate Sunday — with a celebration and thanksgiving for the church's liturgy and music — on Pentecost and especially on Sunday, June 4th, with a one-hundredth anniversary celebration of the Christian Day School. The children of the Christian Day School together with their mothers offer a beautiful and spontaneous expression of the Church's hope and of its remembering. In the message for the day Pastor Patten releases one of the many helium-filled balloons which fill the sanctuary and the congregation watches as the balloon rises to the very peak eighty feet above their heads. As many wonder, "how are we going to get that balloon down?" the point of the day is made. "Tomorrow we could come into the sanctuary and this little gas-filled balloon will have given up its ability to soar. It will lie crumpled on the chancel steps. But those who live by the power of God's Holy Spirit breathing into us through Word, Sacrament, and the life of God's people will rise and soar through storm and sunshine into life everlasting. The Spirit of God *never lets us down.*"

In the Liturgy each Sunday one of the congregational leaders concludes each service with a brief thank-you written from his or her own experience of what Christ's congregation, Concordia, has meant and means in their lives and the lives of their families. These simple "thank-yous" have a deep and warming effect on the lives of all who are called to praise God for His Church.

Although the summer vacation months record no unique expressions of the centennial year, yet beneath the surface of a rising excitement over the coming cele-

brations of college and congregation in September, congregational leaders are pursuing the fulfilling of their ministry in a new and even more dramatic manner. As the congregation is anticipating, committees, boards and Voters' Assemblies are meeting to determine the future shape of Concordia's ministry. It is decided that the congregation will not call a Director of Christian Education but rather call a second pastor. Once the congregation commits itself to a pastor — this not without a great deal of concern, prayer and discussion — Pastor Patten encourages the congregation to call not an assistant but a full pastor with all of the responsibilities and all of the authorities of the pastoral office at Concordia. He feels that nothing less than a pastor with all of the authority and all of the responsibility can enable Concordia to grow into its full stature as ministers together in service to each other and the community. Again, after much discussion and not without misgivings on the part of some of the members, the congregation adopts the concept of a co-pastor and a Call is extended in August to the Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Mazak, Dean of Students at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, North Carolina.



HOPE IS REMEMBERING WITH PRAISE...

One hundred years is but a wink on the face of eternity. What can possibly make ten decades so important in the lives of people? It may be the pleasant symmetry of the numbers or perhaps the mystery of years just beyond the grasp of our life's expectancy. Whatever the source, one hundred years creates for us a magic that is compelling and a moment in time that seems neither artificial nor contrived but basic and natural. The rhythms of living must somehow be remembered and a chain of events must be collected, assembled, shared with each other, celebrated and offered to God *with praise*. It is nothing less than the full remembrance of God's sustaining grace that one month or one year — much less one hundred years — can be experienced and counted as significant and full and worthy of real celebration. For three consecutive Sundays Concordia remembers and celebrates and praises.



September 3, 1978, opens with the Introit Psalmody and words from the 119th Psalm, "Never will I forget Thy promises, for through them Thou hast given me life. Eternal is Thy Work, O Lord, planted firm in heaven. Thy promise endures for all times. This day, as ever, Thy decrees stand fast; for all things serve thee. NEVER WILL I FORGET THY PROMISES FOR THROUGH THEM THOU HAST GIVEN ME LIFE." The Rev. George Mennen, pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Newton, North Carolina, son of Pastor and Mrs. G. E. Mennen, of the congregation and of the college serves as the guest speaker of the day. Under the theme, "Yesterday and Today", Pastor Mennen speaks of Concordia's "beautiful Pioneers." On this day too, the beautiful pioneers of the congregation are remembered as Concordia's children fill the sanctuary with their singing and flood the hearts of the older members, swarming around them in the liturgy with gifts of flowers and hugs and kisses. There is not a worshipper unmoved by a deepened awareness of the gift of God's "Pioneers" and summoned to praise for the beauty of their years, their experience, their faithfulness and their own joyful responses to God's mercy and forgiveness.

The brightness of this week of weeks is suddenly darkened. The Rev. Carl Scaer, pastor of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Newton, who has been suffering for months terminal cancer, dies on Wednesday, September

6th. Members of Concordia gather with the family of God at Mt. Olive in deep sadness, but again with the hope that springs from remembering to give triumphant Christian burial to the young pastor. Pastor Patten is asked to preach the funeral sermon and together with the congregation weeps his way through the sermon to the triumphant cry of the text, "It is finished!"

The life of hoping and remembering and praising is a life of intense lows and exciting highs and twenty-four hours later, Concordia gathers in spirit with the alumni of old Concordia College. More than one hundred fifty alumni and spouses, together with area clergy, attend a memorable outdoor gathering and supper at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Horace J. Isenhower, Sr. on Saturday evening. Barbeque and Bluegrass music speak of the unique personality of these "Southern Lutherans". The smiles, the handshakes, the greetings across the years fill all with the warmth of God's presence and of His promises kept. The joy of the evening is increased as Pastor Mazak gives news informally to Pastor Patten that he will announce the acceptance of the Call to serve as pastor of Concordia the Sunday following the One-Hundredth Celebration Service.

The next morning the sanctuary is packed with alumni, spouses, family, friends, and the people of Concordia. With a festival Communion Liturgy growing out of the theme "Hope Is Remembering with Praise", Con-

cordia pours out its praise into the loving heart of the God it invokes as Father and Son and Holy Spirit. And bending low, the God Who binds hearts together breathes "Concordia" into the spirit of each of the faithful. The day continues with one of Concordia's famous picnics under the oaks given by the members for the alumni, guests and friends. The afternoon is filled with old community movies, gatherings in every corner and a blessed sharing of memory.

The pastors and alumni serve as symbol of the college, the congregation and the Holy Catholic Church as it lives out the reality of Christ's promise, "I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." If there are tears, they are tears of joy, not of regret, and of memory filled with hope that Christ's Word shall endure forever. Concordia, struggling to become a congregation of ministers itself, sees dramatically, beautifully and symbolically the ministry it has helped to create, the ministry which yet awaits the Second Birth.



Rev. Robert Winters of Conover, the Rev. George McRee of Sun City Center, Fla., the Rev. Oswald McRee of Newland, the Rev. Fred Rockett of Phoenix, Ariz., the Rev. Bernard Hemmeter of Ft. Wayne, Ind., the Rev. Gerhardt Wagner of North Port, Fla., the Rev. Worth A. Setzer of Newton, the Rev. George Mennen of Newton, the Rev. Russell Hamack of Richmond, Ky., the Rev. Roland Haase of Richmond, Va., and the Rev. G. Harry Coiner. Not pictured is the Rev. Fred Graef of Conover.

In the evening a Vesper commemoration of Concordia College concludes the day's activity. In what has to be one of the most poignant moments in the history of Concordia, the aged pastoral sons of Concordia College — some ordained as many as fifty years before — lead the congregation and college alumni in worship. Viewed from the perspective of man, the evening is a sad one as it represents a kind of "last hurrah" by a remnant of a small institution that has long since ceased to exist; like some prehistoric creature moving inexorably toward extinction the twelve pastors move the liturgy of the alumni to its ultimate termination. But from the perspective and with the deep insight of God's Holy Spirit the moment is anything but sad. It is an exultant "Alleluia!" shouted by God's people for the years of grace given to His people Concordia, the Word of God preached so faithfully, the hundreds of years of souls lifted to Christ, the countless minds and bodies healed by the touch of Christ through the ministry of the college that was and is.





Alumni Picture – September 10, 1978

FRONT ROW (l to r): Ruth Rockett Hemmeter, Worth Alex Setzer, Robert Winters, Paul Koiner, Horace Isenhower, Harroll Weaver, George Smith, SECOND ROW (l to r): Grace Henry Wiley, Margaret Henry Sparkman, Mary Smith Gore, John Lowe Isenhower, Lula Brady Barker, Ruth Moehlmann Lineberger, Gerhardt (Jim) Moehlmann; THIRD ROW (l to r): Helen Smith Hunicke, Ruth Smith Carter, Helen Hunsucker Saeman, Alma Hewitt, Henrietta Moehlmann Kurth, Clara Drum Reese, Katie Pharr Jалlos, Nora Holler Deal, Willie Mae Smith; FOURTH ROW (l to r): Roland Haase, Rudolph Freed, Josephine Coiner Armentrout, Sophie Coyner McRee, Oswald T. McRee, Elizabeth Coyner McRee, Charlotte Coyner Brady, *Wilson Y. Deal, Rena Spencer; FIFTH ROW (l to r): Gerhardt Wagner, Maude Rice Wagner, *Adele Rowland Smith, Oliver Smith, Fred Rockett, Elmer McRee, Charles Brady, Clifford Brady, George Mennen, Mary Louise Little Mauney; SIXTH ROW (l to r): Forrest Baker, Russel Harnack, Helen Yount Hamack, Celia Isenhower Saunders, Susie Alice Isenhower Hambright, John Y. Little, Oscar Rice, George McRee, Louis Hildebrandt; SEVENTH ROW (l to r): Clarence Smith, *Mrs. Clarence Smith, Darvin Smith, Mabel Yount Dellinger, Goldie Pharr Mauney, Margaret Little Setzer, Katherine Yount Warren, Viola Yount Haupt, Eva Coyner Boyd, Harry Gordon Coiner; EIGHTH ROW (l to r): Norman (Pat) Wagner, Olive Wagner Parker, Clyde Hunsucker, Joel Simmons, F. W. (Beck) Moehlmann.



The goodbyes of the alumni are scarcely past when word begins to move through the congregation that a new pastor is on his way. And the following Sunday, as Southeastern District President Richard Hinz leads the congregation in worship, directed toward "Tomorrow," tomorrow is already opening on a new day for ministry in Christ's Name through His people, Concordia.

Immediately following a particularly exhausting routine, a prima ballerina was asked by a reporter to explain her dance. Her reply was blunt and to the point. "Good heavens, man, if I could explain it I would not have to dance it!" Similarly, there is no concluding explanation or definition nor summary nor heroic statement about the future which can explain Concordia. If we could explain who we are and what our hope is, we would not have to "dance" it, to remember it, to live it, to hope it into existence. Perhaps the concluding events of 1978 say more than some interpretation of events past.



Pastor Mazak is installed as pastor of Concordia Congregation December 3, 1978. As part of the Rite of Installation the pastors are asked to commit themselves in ministry to each other with each other and for the congregation with these words: "As a called and ordained servant of the Word, as pastor of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church and as your brother in Christ, I promise to you and before God and this congregation that I am committed to the unity of Christ's ministry in this place and to all that this implies as we share in common our pastoral responsibilities and enable the fullest possible expression of the diversity of the Holy Spirit's gifts to each of us." And as a part of the same Rite of Installation the congregation is itself invited to commit itself to the

ministry and its unity at Concordia. The congregation commits itself to ministry in the words, "as a priest of the most High God by virtue of my baptism and as a minister together with Jesus Christ, I promise to you before God that I am committed to the unity of Christ's ministry in this place and to all that this implies as we share in common our responsibilities as ministers and enable the fullest expression of the diversity of the Holy Spirit's gifts to each of us."

The Liturgy for the day is almost a family gathering as the Rev. L. R. Lineberger, close friend to both pastors, serves as preacher for the day; the Rev. Dennis Quackenboss, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Statesville, and former vicar at Concordia, serves as Liturgist; the Rev. Margold Harman, former pastor at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Newton, and present assistant to the pastor of Concordia, serves as Lector, and Dr. David Ludwig, head of the Psychology Department at Lenior-Rhyne College and again a good friend of both Pastors Mazak and Patten, serves as Lector.

Pastor Mazak, his wife, Carol née Behnke, a parochial school teacher at St. Stephens Lutheran Church in Hickory and their four daughters, Cheryl, Elizabeth, Anne and Deborah have barely moved into the parsonage when Concordia is suddenly saddened at the death of Mrs. V. G. Deal. Peggy has been secretary to Concordia Congregation for over ten years and has been beyond faithful, often heroic, in her efforts to serve the congregation and her family. Her sudden death leaves a quiet emptiness in the ministry of the congregation for beyond being secretary, Peggy has also been friend, confidant, sister and example. Mrs. Douglas Howard — Doris — who has been serving as assistant secretary, assumes the often overwhelming task of Parish Secretary. The marker year passes and life among God's people, Concordia, goes on.

HOPE IS REMEMBERING WITH PRAISE...

Concordia is not a great congregation, although it has experienced moments of greatness. It is a deeply good congregation, fully capable of greatness. God's people are not called to covet greatness. If greatness comes, it is a gift of God, a challenge of God to service extraordinary. If that summons from God comes, it will be to a people with the best of tradition, with a powerful theology and with outstanding gifts. Today we who are Concordia struggle to envision, to accept, to create the ministry that God has given to us as a congregation and to each of us as individuals. In order to enable that ministry to grow among us, we remember — we hope — and we praise. With boldness in the God of the Cross and Resurrection, and by His grace we will live our purpose and serve our Spirit — created destiny.

SOLA DEO GLORIA

Hope is Remembering



Area Walther League, circa 1925



Pastor and Mrs. George Mennen and family



"Bill" Barker - St. Louis "Sem" Student, 1925



*Members of the Moehlmann Family,
1912 Flanders "20" Studebaker*



Concordia Walther League, 1939



Concordia's Rhythm Band, 1951



"Walt" Brady—Concordia Alumni Gathering 1978







Called Pastors of Concordia Lutheran Church

R. A. Yoder, served from September 8, 1878 until August 26, 1883. Reason left: To attend Lutheran Seminary of Pennsylvania.

J. C. Moser, served from 1884 until December 1888. Reason left: Called to Zion and Holy Trinity.

J. C. Schaid (Vacancy Pastor), served from August 1889 until 1891.

W. H. T. Dau (Called to Concordia College), served from 1892 until 1894.

C. A. Weiss, served from September 2, 1894 until 1896. Reason left: Called to Professorship at Concordia College.

W. H. T. Dau, served from December 27, 1896 until 1899. Reason left: Called to Professorship at Concordia College.

Paul Bischoff, served from July 30, 1899 until July 3, 1911. Reason left: Died in-service to Concordia.

E. T. Coyner, served from January 7, 1912 until December 10, 1912. Reason left: Called to California.

W. O. Bischoff, served from March 2, 1913 until June 20, 1915. Reason left: Called to Indiana.

O. W. Kreinheder, served from April 30, 1916 until August 18, 1918. Reason left: Called to Professorship at Concordia College.

George E. Mennen, Sr., served from January 1, 1919 until January 1, 1944. Reason left: Declining health.

R. F. Lineberger, served from January 2, 1944 until April 26, 1961. Reason left: Died in-service to Concordia.

Edward F. Meyer, served from March 4, 1962 until July 9, 1972. Reason left: Called to Minnesota.

H. J. Patten, began service November 19, 1972.

S. G. Mazak, began service December 8, 1978.

Vicars of Concordia Lutheran Church

YEAR OF SERVICE

Robert Kriger	1966-67
Louis Beyer	1967-68
Dennis Ouackenboss	1968-69
John Sandstrom	1969-70
Douglas Corniels	1970-71
Larry Brakenhoff	1971-72

Teachers of Concordia Christian Day School

1873 — Conover had a school, taught by various teachers including **Rev. Adolphus Yount**, probably from St. John's Union Church, a common sanctuary shared by what became St. Johns Lutheran Church and a Reformed Congregation. **Rev. J. M. Smith** also taught.

1877-1892 "Primary through High School" age children were accepted at Concordia College, founded by Rev. P. C. Henkel.

On March 11, 1878 **R. A. Yoder** (student of theology under Henkel) opened first session of Concordia High School with 19 pupils. Age of the pupils is not known, but it seems there were those also in the Primary Department. An 1887-88 catalog of the College lists the Primary Department as having 41 pupils. An 1890 Tennessee Synod document mentions a primary teacher, **Miss M. Ella Rhodes**.

About 1894 (English Missouri Synod) this Primary Department of the College seems to have become the school of Concordia Congregation. President of the College **W. H. T. Dau** was instrumental in making the separation. **Mr. Preston M. Dellinger** was engaged by Concordia Congregation to conduct a Christian Day School.

Others who have had a part in the early teaching of the school are **A. L. Barger** and **D. M. Koiner**. The following teachers can be fairly well established: **Mr. Richard Bendick** (Oct. 1908), **Mrs. Koch**, **Mr. Hueschen**, **Amy Bischoff** (1913), **Galian Yount**, **Helen Hemmeter** (1916).

1921-22 — **Walter D. Spencer**

1922-23 — **Walter Timm**, **Mary Page**

1923-24 — **Mary Page**, **Clarence Kurth**

1924-25 — **Clarence Kurth**, **Mary Page**

1925-26 — **Clarence Kurth**, **Mary Page**

1926-27 — Clarence Kurth, Fred Rockett
 1927-28 — Clarence Kurth, Sophie Coyner (1/2 year),
 Viola Yount (1/2 year)
 1928-29 — Clarence Kurth, Carl Rullman
 1929-30 — Carl Rullman, Helen Huffman
 1930-31 — William Kottmeyer, Helen Huffman
 1931-32 — Carl Rullman
 1932-33 — Carl Rullman

School discontinued until 1946

1946-47 — Harry R. Voigt, Alfred Beck
 1947-48 — Harry R. Voigt, Robert Hentscher, Norma
 Steinberg
 1948-49 — Harry R. Voigt, Robert Hentscher, Norma
 Steinberg
 1949-50 — Harry R. Voigt, Betty Yount, Lois Westcott
 1950-51 — Harry R. Voigt, Betty Yount, Lois Westcott
 1951-52 — Harry R. Voigt, Lois Westcott, Dorothy
 Kuerschner
 1952-53 — Harry R. Voigt, Lois Westcott, Dorothy
 Kuerschner
 1953-54 — Harry R. Voigt, Mrs. Harry R. Voigt, Mrs.
 P. H. McRee
 1954-55 — Harry R. Voigt, Mrs. Harry R. Voigt, Mrs.
 P. H. McRee
 1955-56 — Duane Brunette, Mrs. Harry R. Voigt, Mrs.
 P. H. McRee
 1956-57 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Duane Brunette, Carol
 Schlieske
 1957-58 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Carl Waldow Jr., Marie
 Blase
 1958-59 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Myrtle Stubbolo, Mrs.
 Jerry (Marie Blase) Buff
 1959-60 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Myrtle Stubbolo, Marie
 Buff
 1960-61 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Anthony Zuelsdorf,
 Betty Redeker
 1961-62 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Ann Hemke, Betty Red-
 eker, PLUS Mrs. J. R. (Betty Yount) Spencer, Kinder-
 garten (1st)
 1962-63 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Roger Thusius, Mrs.
 Roger (Betty Redeker) Thusius, Betty Spencer
 1963-64 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Roger Thusius, Mrs.
 Clyde (Ruby) Hunsucker, Betty Thusius, Betty Spencer
 (Grades 7 and 8 discontinued beginning 1964-65 term)
 1964-65 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Roger Thusius, Betty
 Thusius, Betty Spencer
 1965-66 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Roger Thusius, Betty
 Thusius, Betty Spencer
 1966-67 — James Lange, Donald Reder, Sandra Wo-
 jahn, Betty Spencer
 1967-68 — James Lange, Donald Reder, Sandra Wo-
 jahn, Elaine Sipe, Betty Spencer
 1968-69 — James Lange, Donald Reder, Elaine Sipe,
 Mrs. James Lange (part-time), Betty Spencer
 1969-70 — James Lange, Janet Sauer, Mrs. John (Laura)

Sandstrom, Betty Spencer

1970-71 — Betty Spencer (Acting Principal and Kin-
 dergarten teacher), Janet Sauer, Deborah Roesener, Mrs.
 Douglas (Barbara) Corniels through November/Mrs.
 E. F. (Melba) Meyer to end of 1971/Mervin Munster bal-
 ance of school year

1971-72 — Betty Spencer, Mervin Munster, Janet
 Sauer, Deborah Roesener

1972-73 — Betty Spencer, Mervin Munster, Janet
 Sauer, Deborah Roesener

1973-74 — Betty Spencer, Mervin Munster, Janet
 Sauer, Deborah Roesener

1974-75 — Betty Spencer, Mervin Munster, Janet
 Sauer, Deborah Roesener

1975-76 — Betty Spencer, Mervin Munster, Janet
 Sauer, Deborah Roesener

1976-77 — Alan Gunderman (Principal only), Gilbert
 W. Pingel, Janet Sauer, Mrs. Walther (Shirley) Klenke,
 Betty Spencer

1977-78 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Principal & teacher of 5th
 and 6th grades, Janet Sauer, Shirley Klenke, Betty
 Spencer

1978-79 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Mrs. David (Kathy)
 Ludwig, Shirley Klenke, Betty Spencer

1979-80 — Gilbert W. Pingel, Kathy Ludwig, Shirley
 Klenke, Betty Spencer

Evangelical Lutheran Pastors Graduates of Concordia College Tennessee Synod

Rev. P. C. Wike '86 Tom's Brook, Va.
 Rev. J. P. Price '88 Concord, N. C.
 Rev. William L. Darr '89 Chapin, S. C.
 Rev. J. P. Miller '89 Hickory, N. C.
 Rev. A. L. Bolick '90 Alamo, Ind.
 Rev. Jacob Wike '90 Ilex, N. C.

Professors and Teachers Graduates of Concordia College Tennessee Synod

D. Marion Moser '86 Oakesdale, Wash.
 Prof. Charles L. Coon '89 CONOVER, N. C.
 Prof. M. H. Yount '89 CONOVER, N. C.
 P. E. Hunsucker '89 Oakesdale, Wash.
 Bessie I. Yount '89 CONOVER, N. C.
 J. M. Moser '90 Mt. Olive, Va.
 A. P. Whisenhunt '90 Granite Falls, N. C.
 Mrs. A. P. Whisenhunt '90 Granite Falls, N. C.
 Mrs. Alice Long '91 Prosperity, S. C.
 Mrs. B. Wessenbacher '91 Hickory, N. C.

Professors and Teachers

LCMS

Rev. Prof. W. H. T. Dau Pres. CC 1892-99
Rev. Prof. George A. Romoser Pres. CC 1899-1911
Rev. Prof. C. A. Weiss Pres. CC 1911-1912
Rev. Prof. Ad. Haentzschel Pres. CC 1912
Rev. Prof. H. B. Hemmeter.... Pres. CC 1913-17, 30-35
Rev. Prof. Oswald W. Kreinheder.... Pres. CC 1918-28
Rev. Prof. C. O. Smith Pres. CC 1928-30

Rev. Prof. Louis B. Buchheimer
Rev. Prof. O. W. H. Lindemeyer
Rev. Prof. George E. Mennen Sr.
Rev. Prof. George Dolak
Rev. Prof. Martin H. Coyner
Rev. Prof. Paul Bischoff
Rev. Prof. Fredrick A. Freed
Rev. Prof. J. S. Koiner
Rev. Prof. George Luecke
Rev. Prof. C. F. Fredericks
Rev. Prof. W. A. Setzer
Rev. Prof. W. O. Bischoff
Rev. Prof. W. B. Hunsucker
Rev. Prof. H. A. Burandt
Rev. Prof. Fred Rockett
Rev. Prof. Walter O. Pasche
Rev. Prof. Fred Schoerner
Rev. Prof. James L. Summers
Rev. Prof. G. Kuegele
Rev. Prof. Biegner
Rev. Prof. Bosse

Prof. Charles L. Coon
Prof. George Long

Maude V. Abernathy
Fannie O. Eckard
Mrs. Alice Long
Amy Bischoff, Music
Marie Koch, Music
Mrs. Schaff, Music

Minister of Christian Education

Allen D. Gunderman

Presidents of Concordia College, Conover, N. C.

Under the Tennessee Synod

Dr. P. C. Henkel..... 1881-1885
Rev. J. C. Moser 1885-1888
Dr. R. A. Yoder..... 1888-1889
No President 1891-1892

Under the Missouri Synod

W. H. T. Dau 1892-1899
G. A. Romoser 1899-1911
C. A. Weiss
Ad. Haentzschel 1911-1913
H. B. Hemmeter 1913-1917
O. W. Kreinheder 1917-1928
C. O. Smith 1928-1930
H. B. Hemmeter 1930-1935

Professors and Teachers

Tennessee Synod

P. C. Henkel	J. P. Miller
R. A. Yoder	J. F. Moser
J. S. Koiner	G. M. Moser
J. C. Moser	R. L. Fritz
J. H. Boyte	A. P. Whisenhunt
J. G. Schaid	Mrs. R. A. Yoder
M. H. Yount	Mrs. J. S. Koiner
C. L. Coon	Miss Maggie A. Fisher

